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OPERATION GALACTIC STORM

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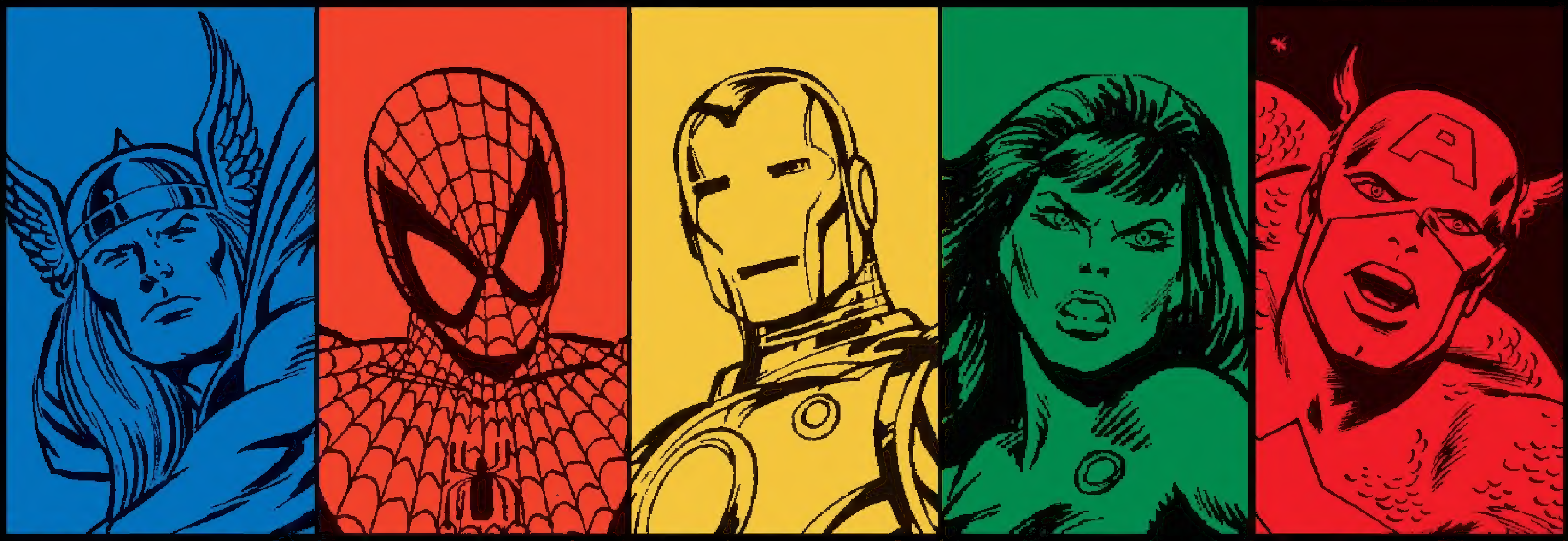

EPIC COLLECTION

AVENGERS

OPERATION GALACTIC STORM

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"TURN OF THE SENTRY"

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CAPTAIN AMERICA #401, JUNE 1992
"AFTER THE STORM"

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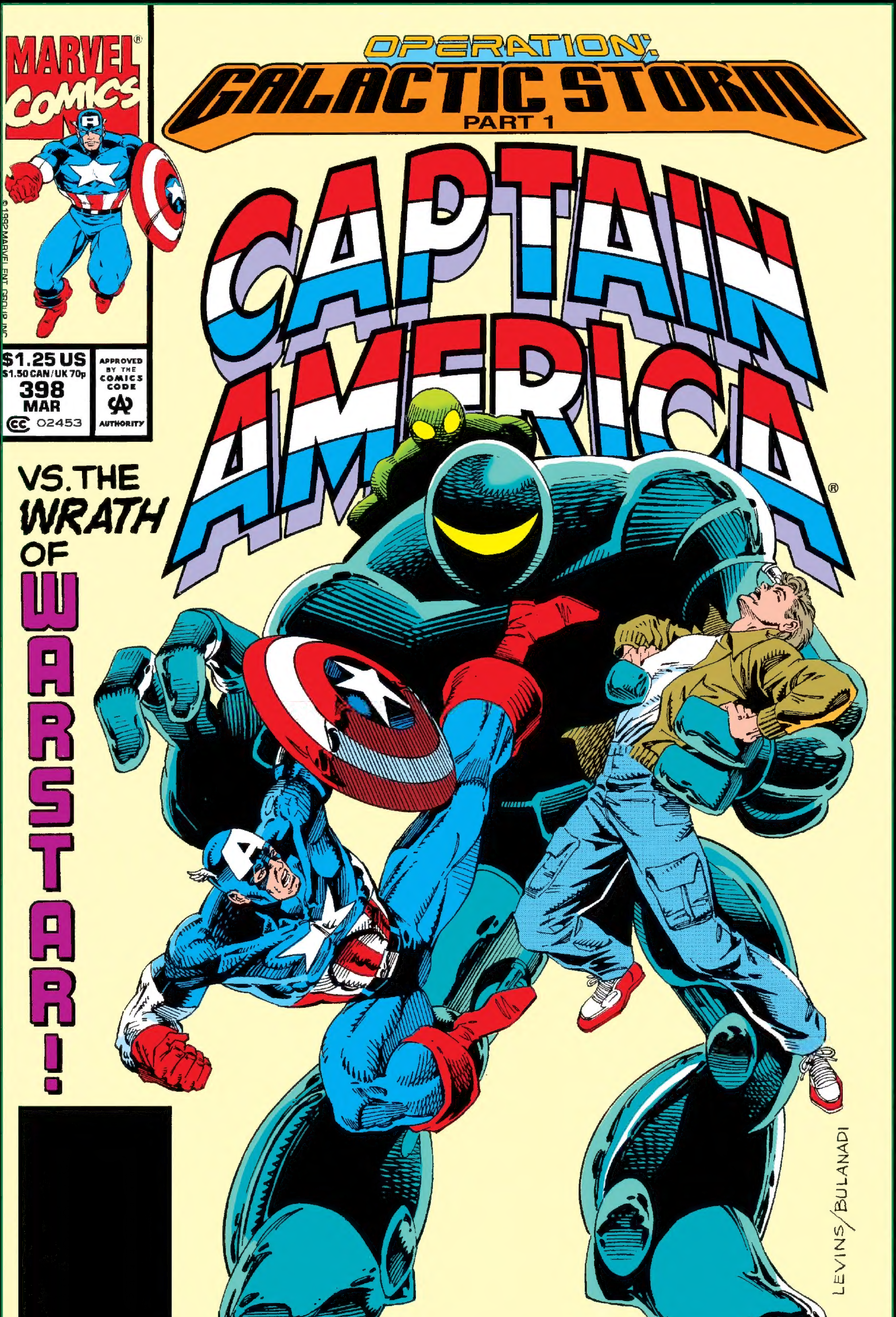
MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA
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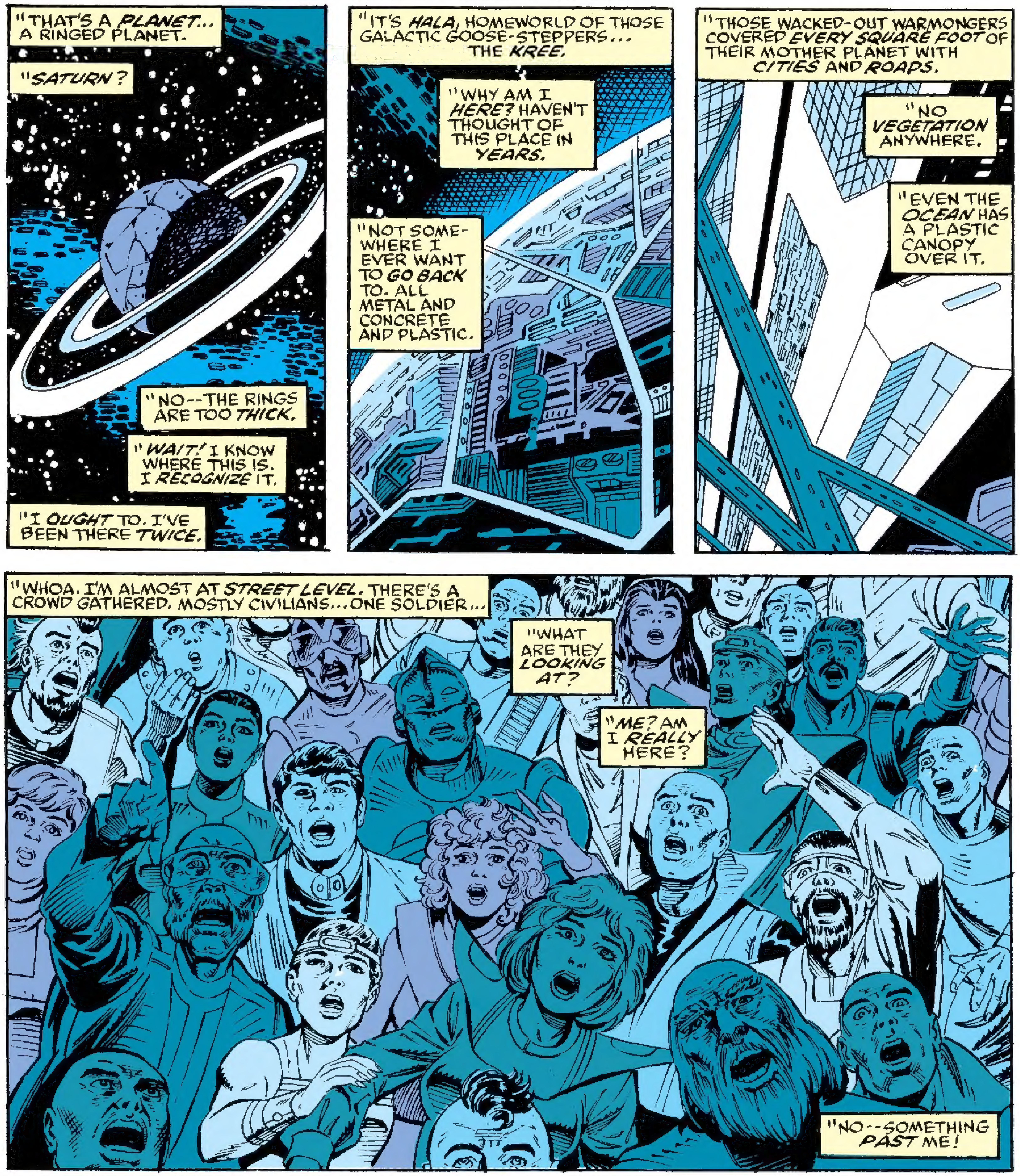
VS. THE WRATH OF WARSTAR!
LEVINS/BULANADI

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

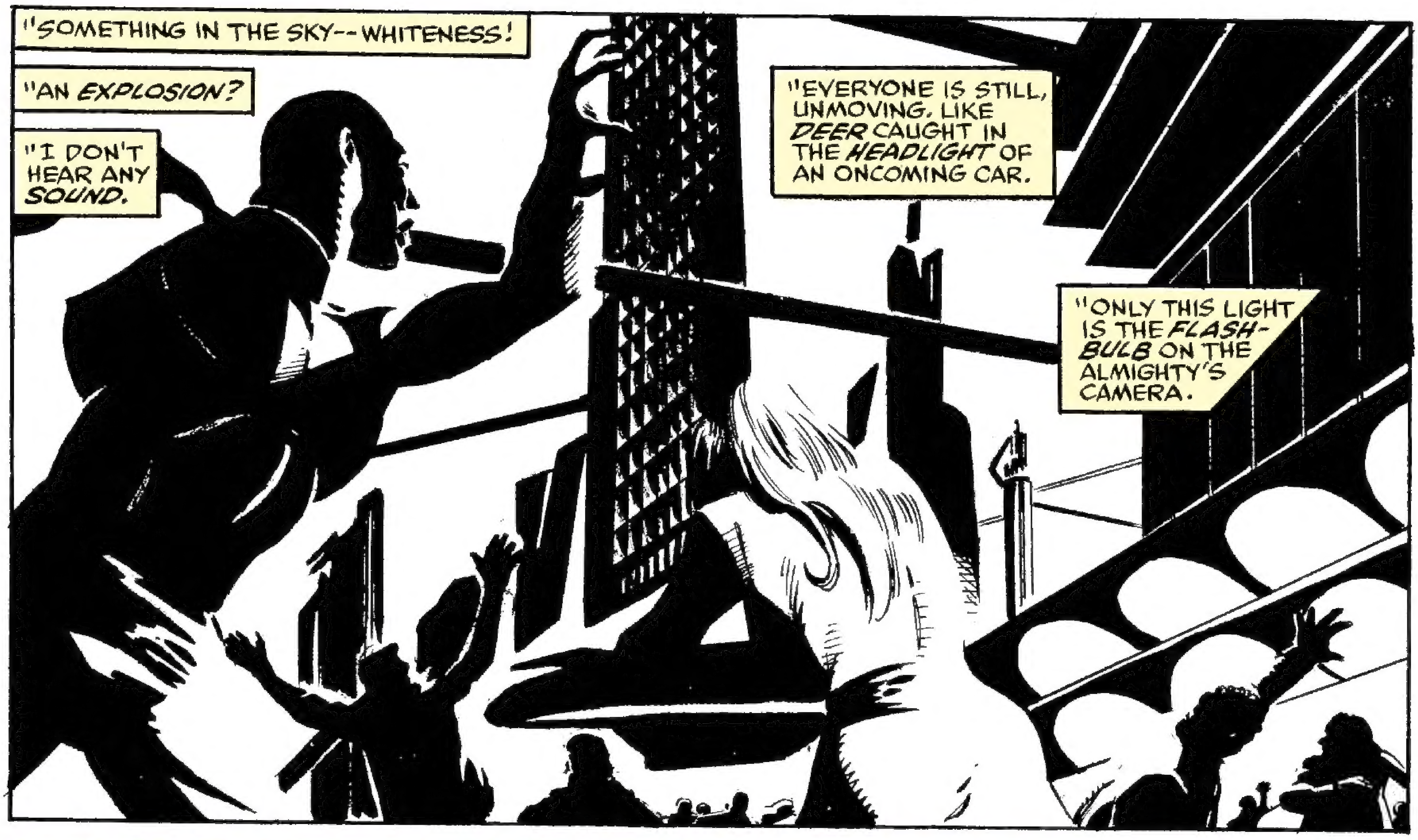
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 1

CAPTAIN AMERICA

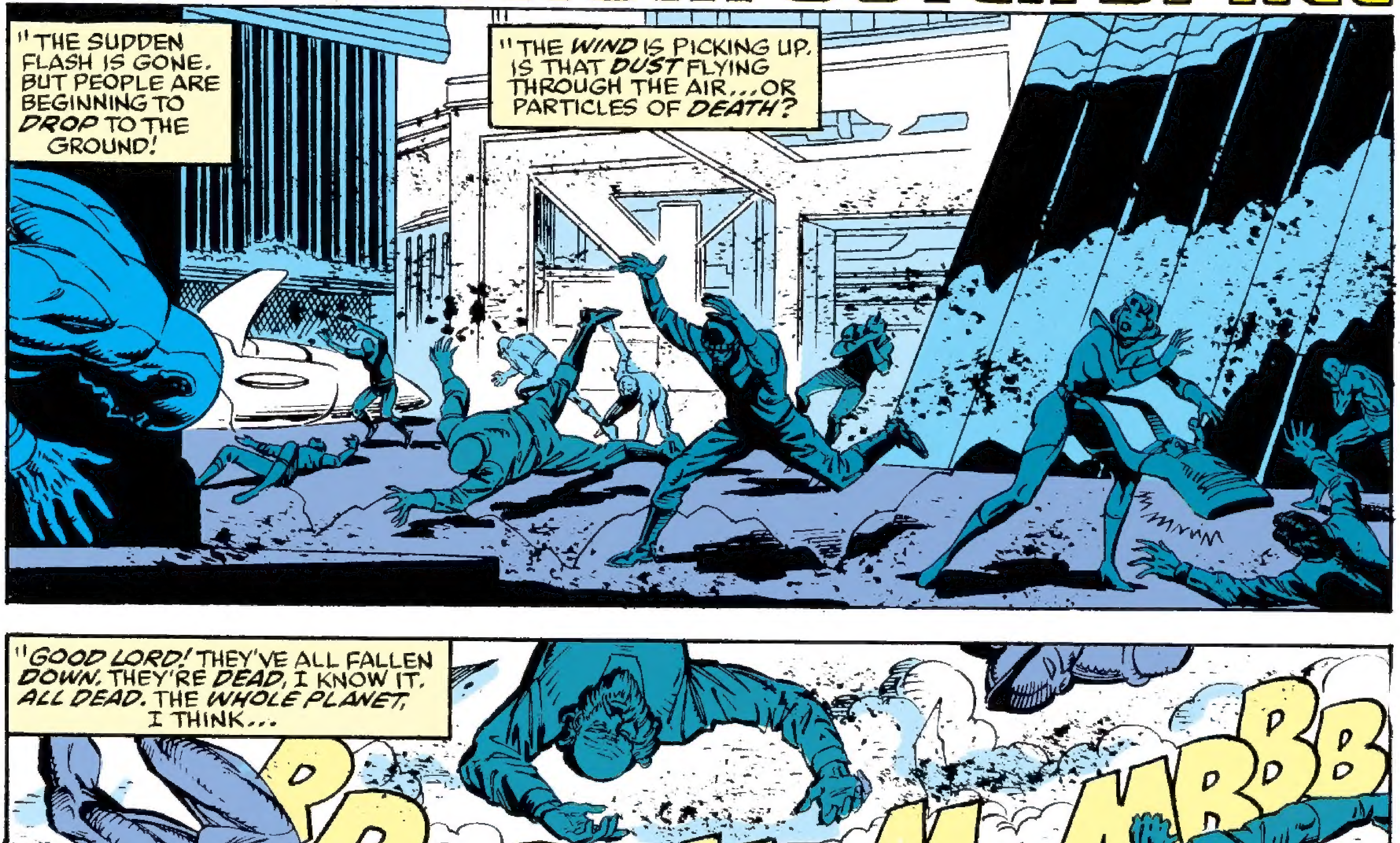
AS BOTH LONE CRUSADER AND LEADER OF THE RENOWNED AVENGERS, STEVE ROGERS FIGHTS AN ONGOING BATTLE FOR LIBERTY, JUSTICE, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM! BUT NOW HE WILL FIND HIMSELF SWEPT UP IN A WAR BEYOND ANY AMERICAN'S WILDEST DREAMS. . .

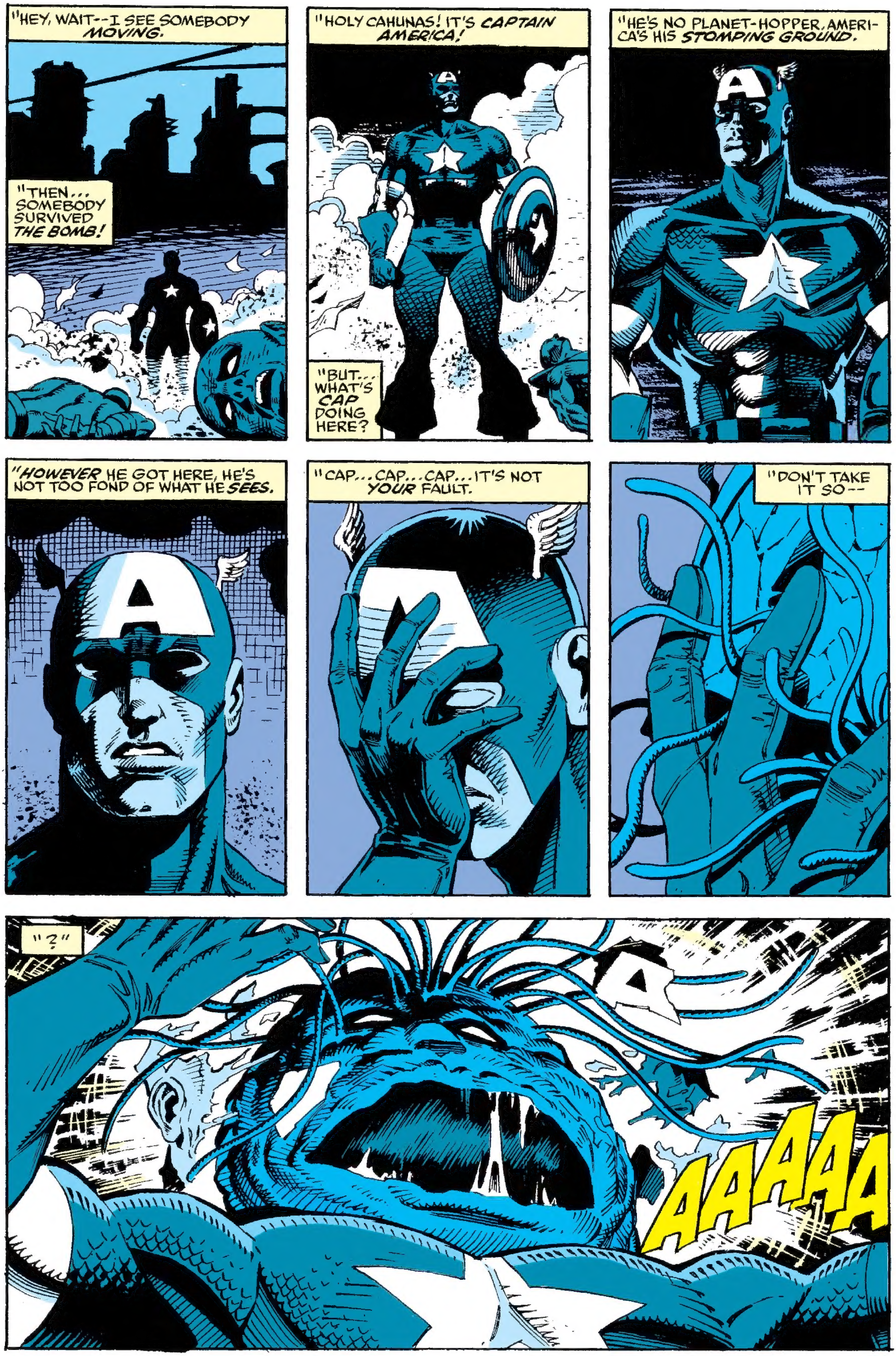

"THAT'S A *PLANET*... A RINGED PLANET.
"*SATURN*?
"NO--THE RINGS ARE TOO *THICK*.
"*WAIT!* I KNOW WHERE THIS IS. I *RECOGNIZE* IT.
"I *OUGHT* TO. I'VE BEEN THERE *TWICE*.
"IT'S *HALA*, HOMEWORLD OF THOSE GALACTIC GOOSE-STEPPERS... THE *KREE*.
"WHY AM I *HERE*? HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF THIS PLACE IN *YEARS*.
"NOT SOMEWHERE I EVER WANT TO *GO BACK* TO. ALL METAL AND CONCRETE AND PLASTIC.
"THOSE WACKED-OUT WARMONGERS COVERED *EVERY SQUARE FOOT* OF THEIR MOTHER PLANET WITH *CITIES* AND *ROADS*.
"NO *VEGETATION* ANYWHERE.
"EVEN THE *OCEAN* HAS A PLASTIC CANOPY OVER IT.
"WHOA. I'M ALMOST AT *STREET LEVEL*. THERE'S A CROWD GATHERED. MOSTLY CIVILIANS... ONE SOLDIER...
"WHAT ARE THEY *LOOKING* AT?
"*ME*? AM I *REALLY* HERE?
"NO--SOMETHING *PAST* ME!

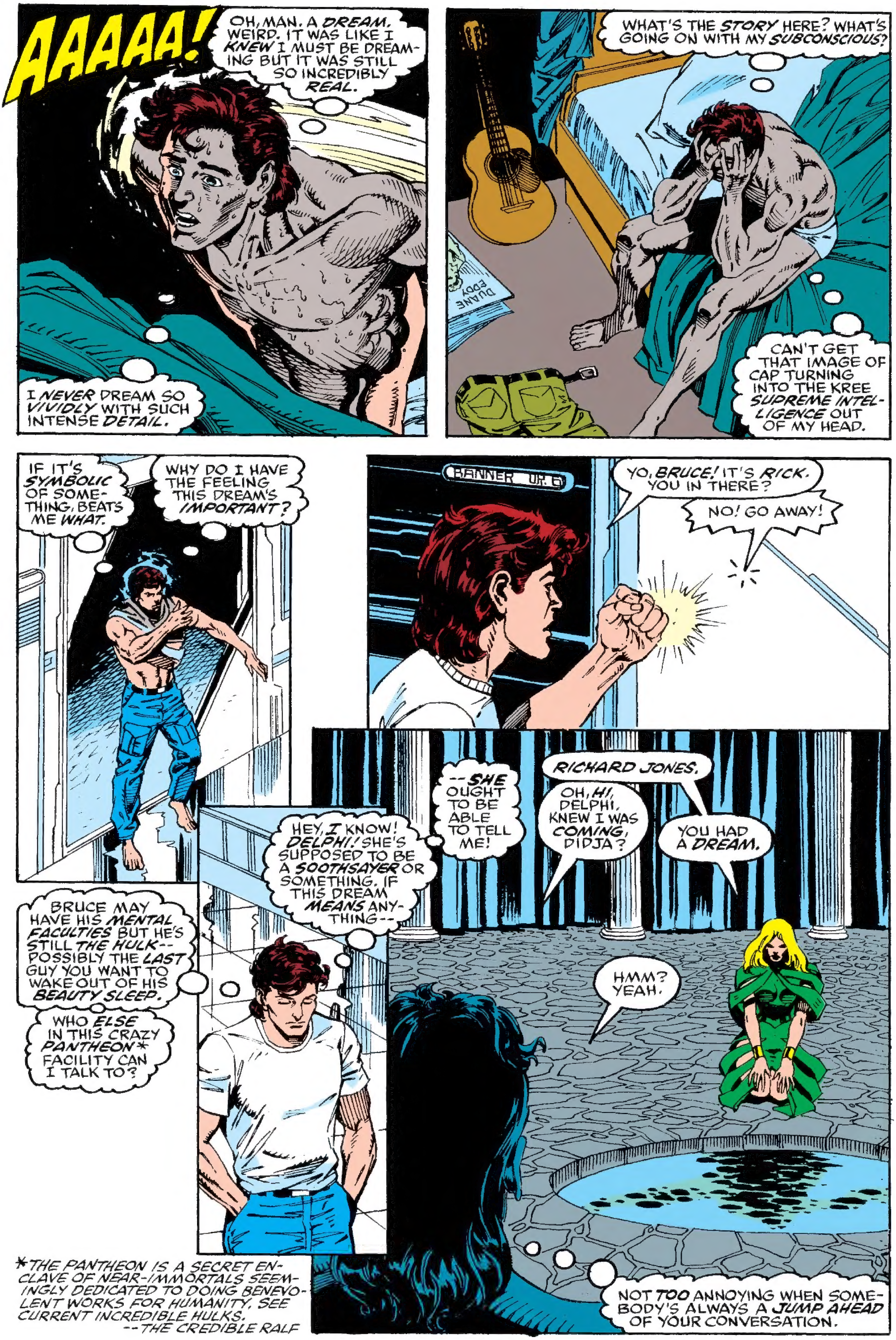
MARK GRUENWALD story | RIK LEVINS pencils | DANNY BULANADI inks | JOE ROSEN letters | CHRISTIE SCHEELE colors | RALPH MACCHIO editor | TOM DeFALCO warlord in chief

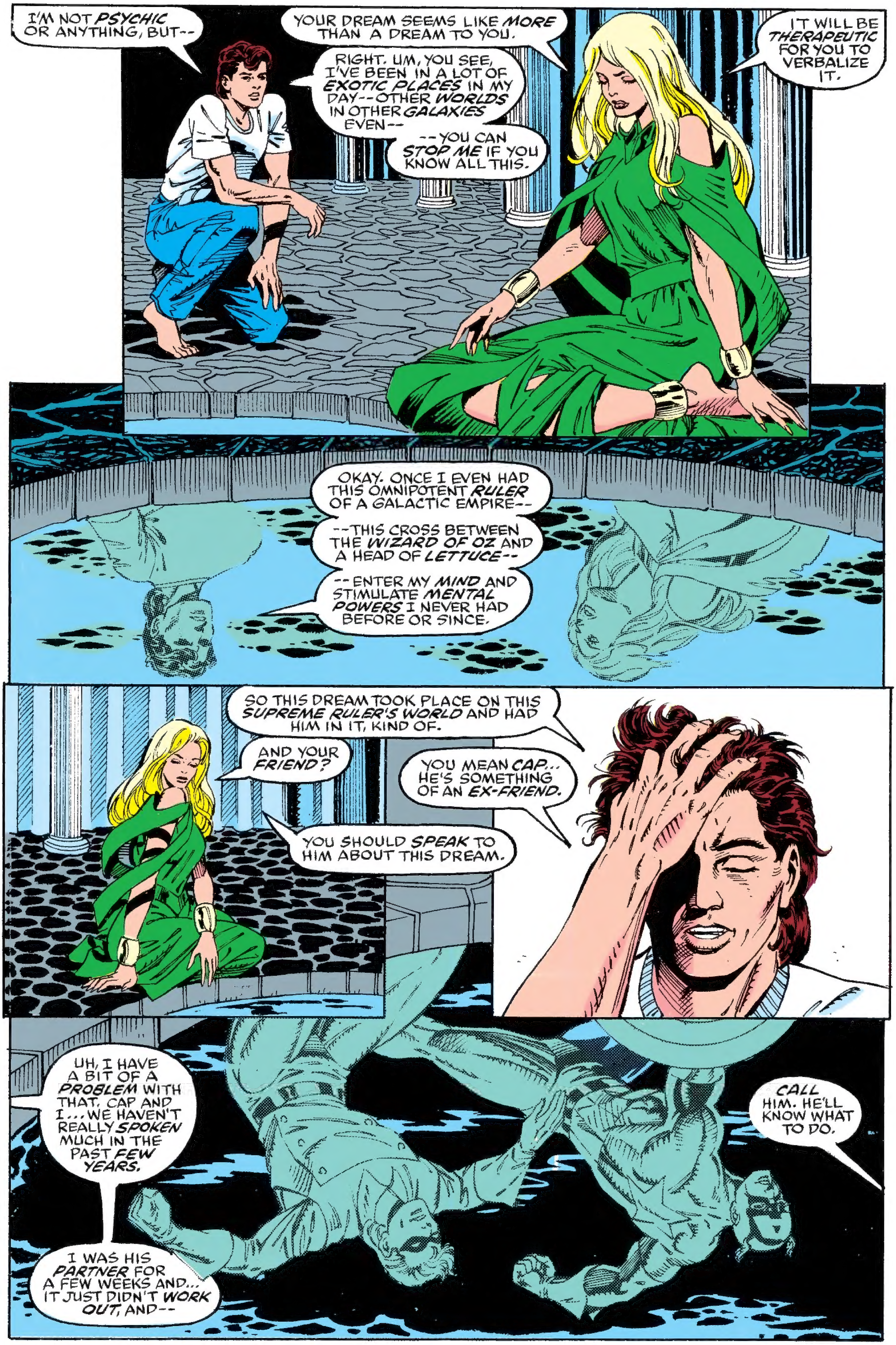

"SOMETHING IN THE SKY--WHITENESS!
"AN *EXPLOSION?*
"I DON'T HEAR ANY *SOUND.*
"EVERYONE IS STILL, UNMOVING, LIKE *DEER* CAUGHT IN THE *HEADLIGHT* OF AN ONCOMING CAR.
"ONLY THIS LIGHT IS THE *FLASHBULB* ON THE ALMIGHTY'S CAMERA.

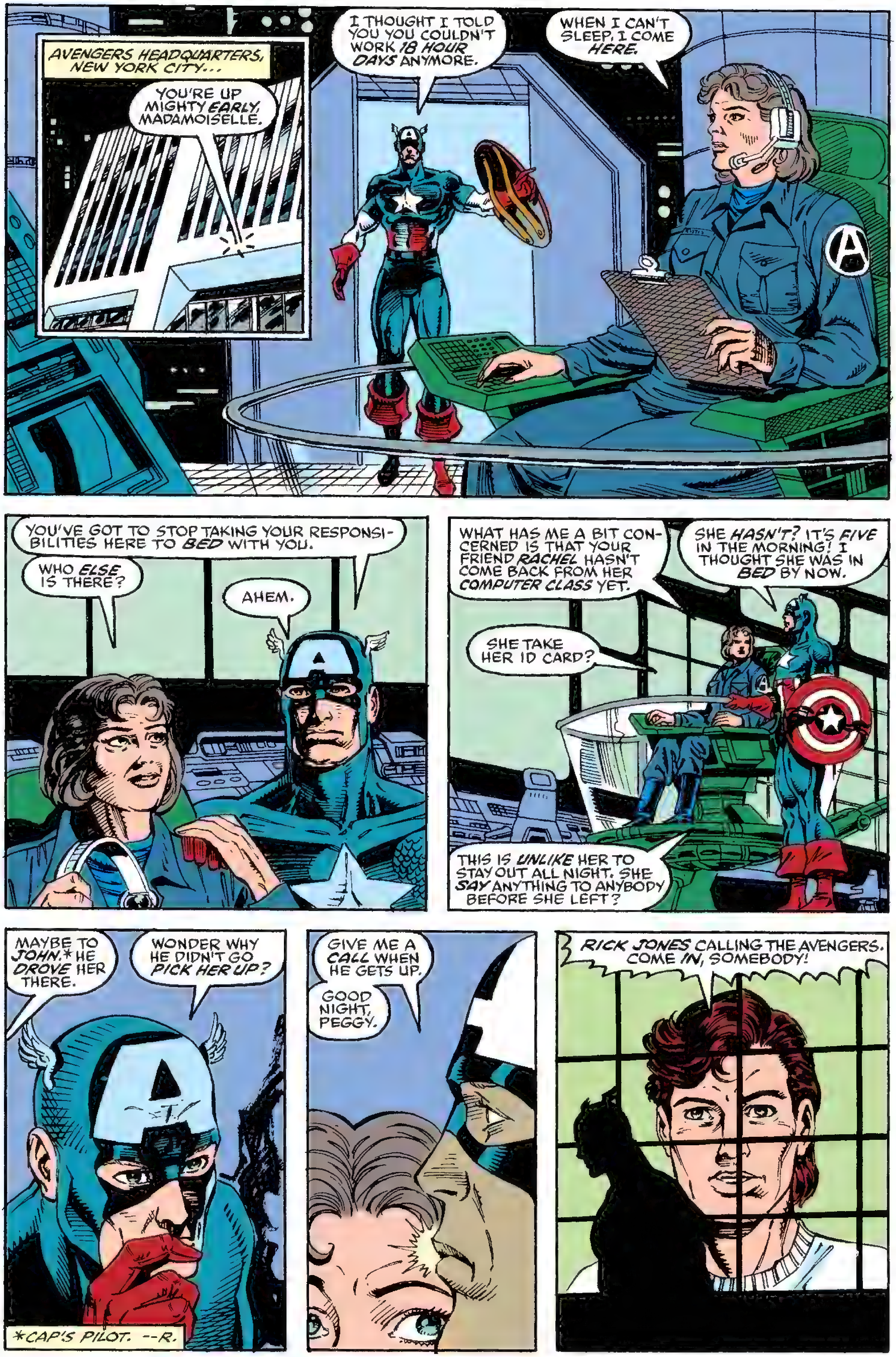
IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

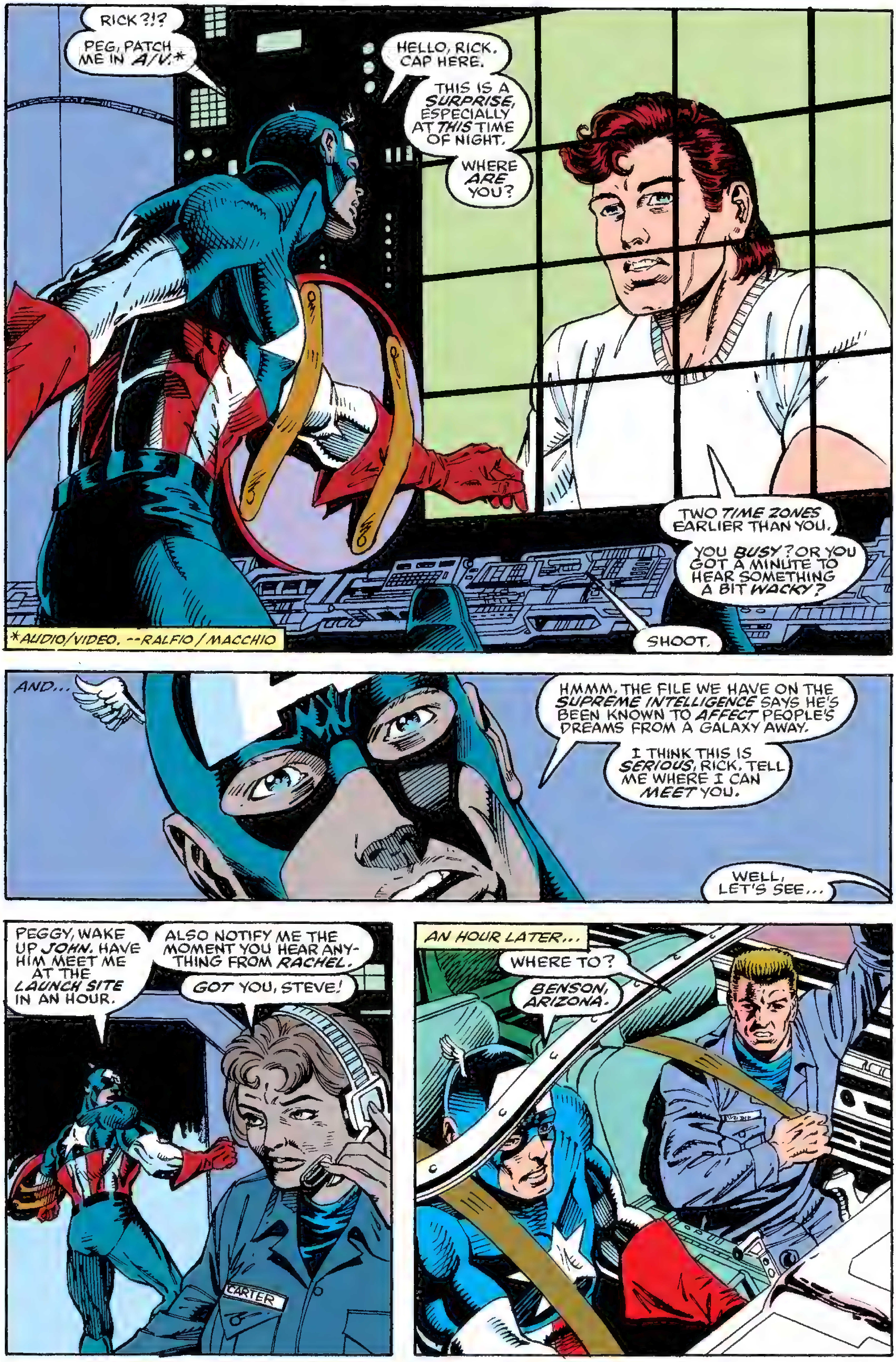

"THE SUDDEN FLASH IS GONE. BUT PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO *DROP* TO THE GROUND!
"THE *WIND* IS PICKING UP. IS THAT *DUST* FLYING THROUGH THE AIR...OR PARTICLES OF *DEATH?*
"*GOOD LORD!* THEY'VE ALL FALLEN *DOWN.* THEY'RE *DEAD,* I KNOW IT. *ALL DEAD.* THE *WHOLE PLANET,* I THINK...
PRRRRRMMMMMMBBB
"THE SHOCKWAVE'S FINALLY ARRIVED, BUT THERE'S NO ONE ALIVE TO *HEAR* IT!

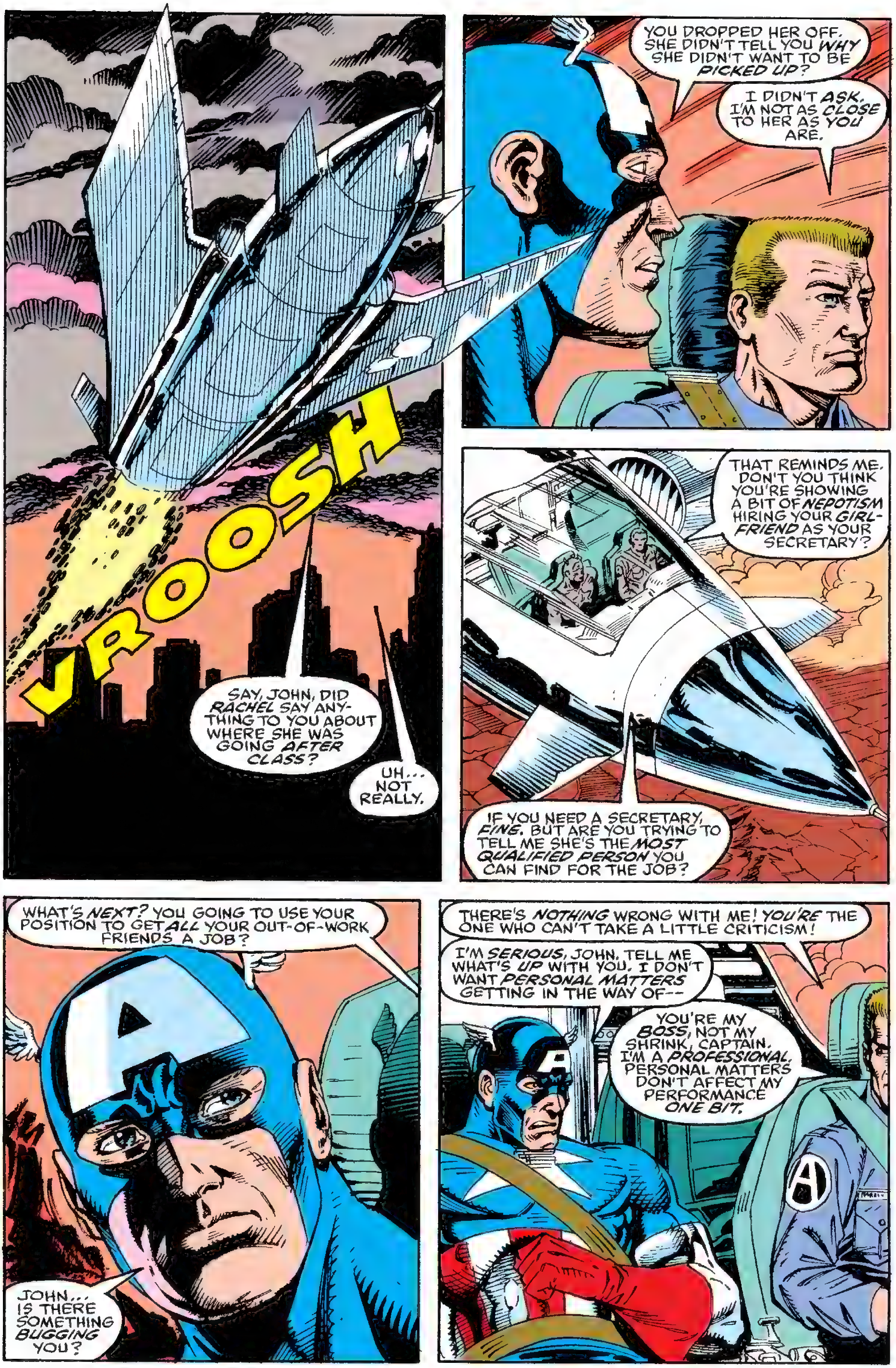

"HEY, WAIT--I SEE SOMEBODY *MOVING.*
"THEN... SOMEBODY SURVIVED *THE BOMB!*
"HOLY CAHUNAS! IT'S *CAPTAIN AMERICA!*
"BUT... WHAT'S *CAP* DOING HERE?
"HE'S NO PLANET-HOPPER. AMERICA'S HIS *STOMPING GROUND.*
"*HOWEVER* HE GOT HERE, HE'S NOT TOO FOND OF WHAT HE *SEES.*
"CAP...CAP...CAP...IT'S NOT *YOUR* FAULT.
"DON'T TAKE IT SO--
"?"
AAAAA

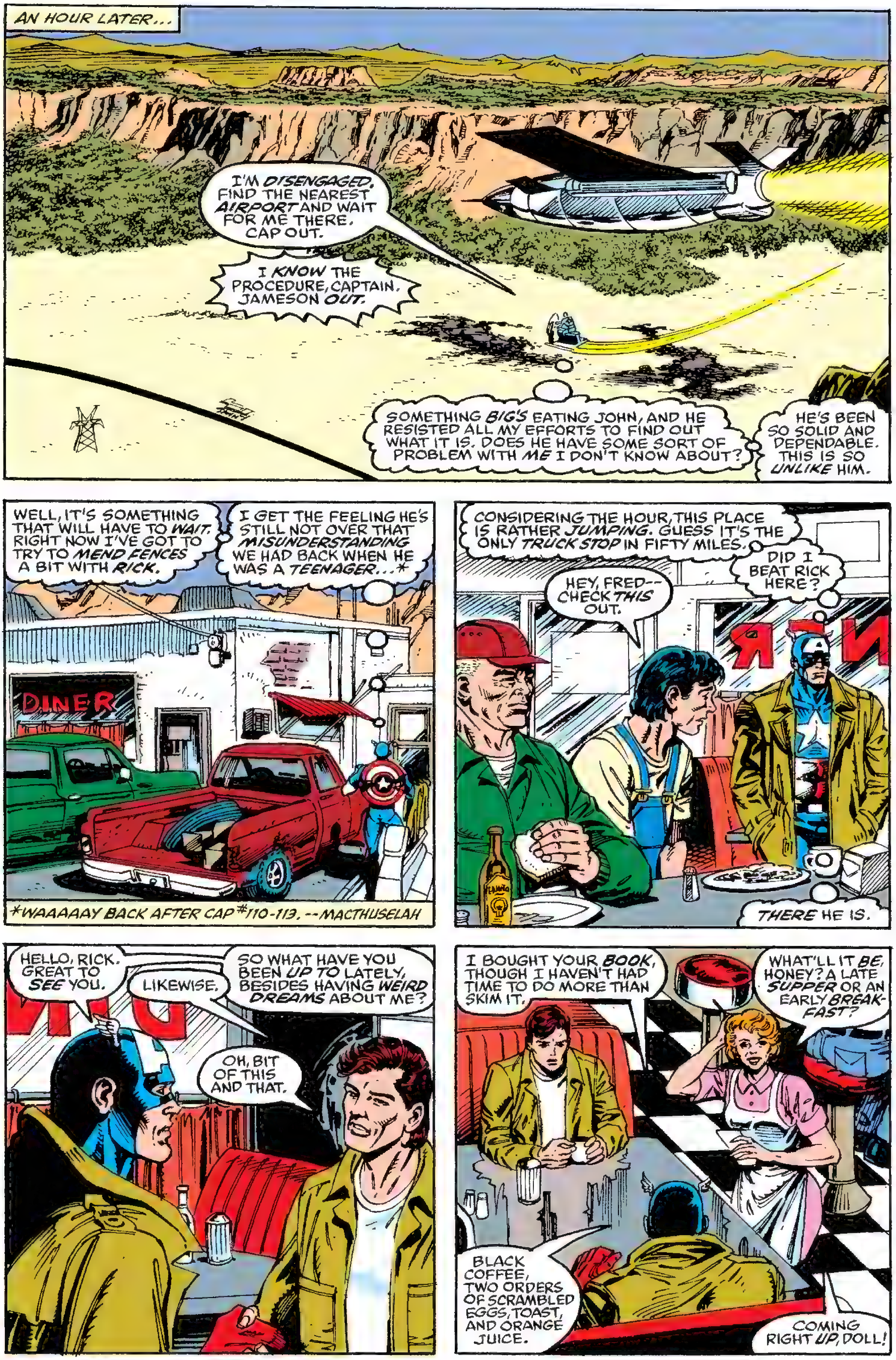

AAAAA!
OH, MAN. A *DREAM*. WEIRD. IT WAS LIKE I *KNEW* I MUST BE DREAMING BUT IT WAS STILL SO INCREDIBLY *REAL*.
I *NEVER* DREAM SO *VIVIDLY* WITH SUCH INTENSE *DETAIL*.
WHAT'S THE *STORY* HERE? WHAT'S GOING ON WITH MY *SUBCONSCIOUS*?
DUANE EDDY
CAN'T GET THAT IMAGE OF CAP TURNING INTO THE KREE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE* OUT OF MY HEAD.
IF IT'S *SYMBOLIC* OF SOMETHING, BEATS ME *WHAT*.
WHY DO I HAVE THE FEELING THIS DREAM'S *IMPORTANT*?
BANNER QR. 6
YO, *BRUCE!* IT'S *RICK*. YOU IN THERE?
NO! GO AWAY!
BRUCE MAY HAVE HIS *MENTAL FACULTIES* BUT HE'S STILL *THE HULK*-- POSSIBLY THE *LAST* GUY YOU WANT TO WAKE OUT OF HIS *BEAUTY SLEEP*.
WHO *ELSE* IN THIS CRAZY *PANTHEON** FACILITY CAN I TALK TO?
HEY, *I* KNOW! *DELPHI!* SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A *SOOTHSAYER* OR SOMETHING. IF THIS DREAM *MEANS* ANYTHING--
--*SHE* OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO TELL ME!
RICHARD JONES.
OH, *HI*, DELPHI. KNEW I WAS *COMING*, DIDJA?
YOU HAD A *DREAM*.
HMM? YEAH.
NOT *TOO* ANNOYING WHEN SOMEBODY'S ALWAYS A *JUMP AHEAD* OF YOUR CONVERSATION.
**THE PANTHEON IS A SECRET ENCLAVE OF NEAR-IMMORTALS SEEMINGLY DEDICATED TO DOING BENEVOLENT WORKS FOR HUMANITY. SEE CURRENT INCREDIBLE HULKS. --THE CREDIBLE RALF*

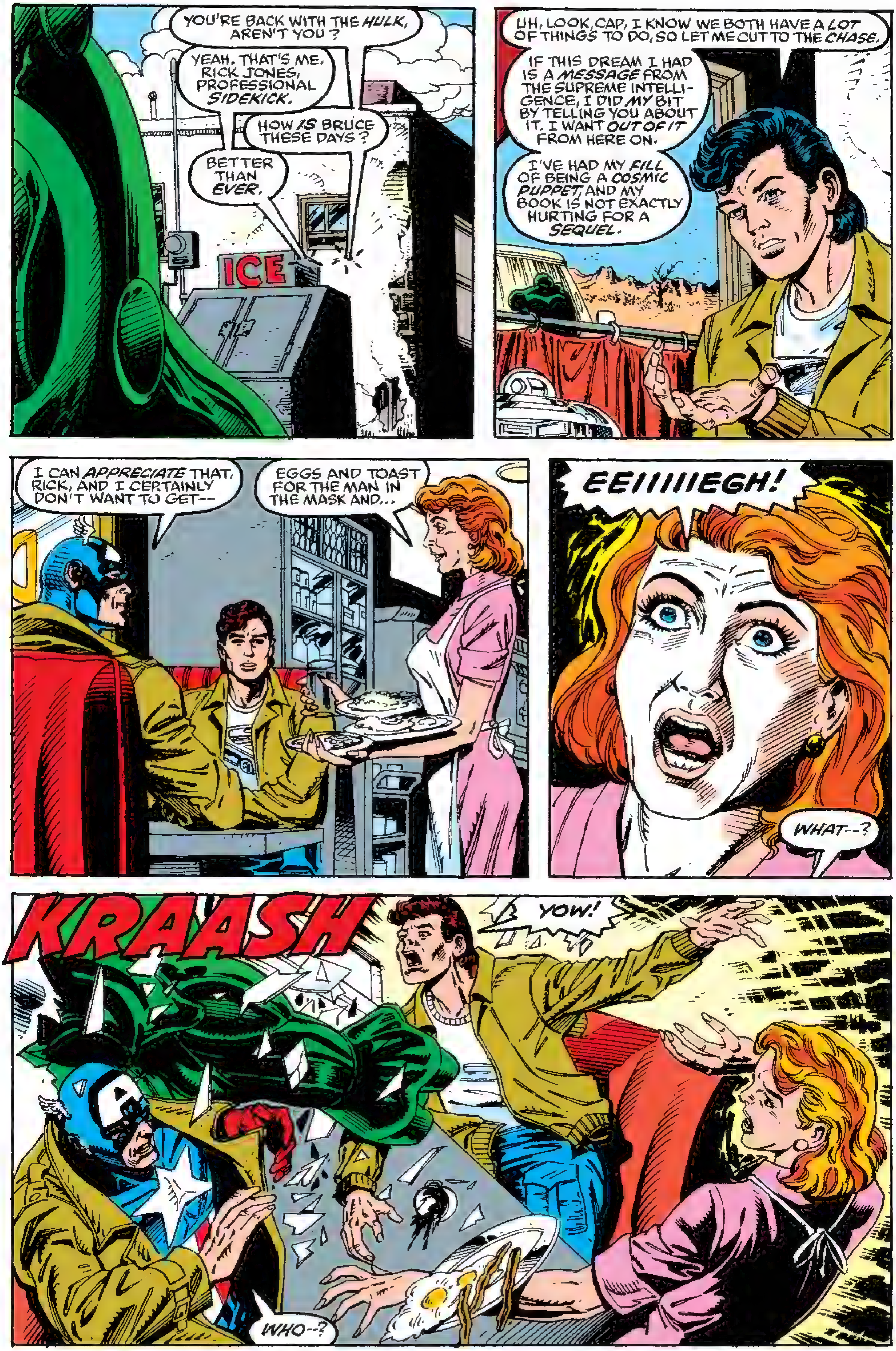

I'M NOT *PSYCHIC* OR ANYTHING, BUT--
YOUR DREAM SEEMS LIKE *MORE* THAN A DREAM TO YOU.
IT WILL BE *THERAPEUTIC* FOR YOU TO VERBALIZE IT.
RIGHT. UM, YOU SEE, I'VE BEEN IN A LOT OF *EXOTIC PLACES* IN MY DAY--OTHER *WORLDS* IN OTHER *GALAXIES* EVEN--
--YOU CAN *STOP ME* IF YOU KNOW ALL THIS.
OKAY. ONCE I EVEN HAD THIS OMNIPOTENT *RULER* OF A GALACTIC EMPIRE--
--THIS CROSS BETWEEN THE *WIZARD OF OZ* AND A HEAD OF *LETTUCE*--
--ENTER MY *MIND* AND STIMULATE *MENTAL POWERS* I NEVER HAD BEFORE OR SINCE.
SO THIS DREAM TOOK PLACE ON THIS *SUPREME RULER'S WORLD* AND HAD HIM IN IT, KIND OF.
AND YOUR *FRIEND?*
YOU MEAN *CAP*... HE'S SOMETHING OF AN *EX-FRIEND*.
YOU SHOULD *SPEAK* TO HIM ABOUT THIS DREAM.
UH, I HAVE A BIT OF A *PROBLEM* WITH THAT. CAP AND I... WE HAVEN'T REALLY *SPOKEN* MUCH IN THE PAST *FEW YEARS.*
I WAS HIS *PARTNER* FOR A FEW WEEKS AND... IT JUST DIDN'T *WORK OUT,* AND--
CALL HIM. HE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO.

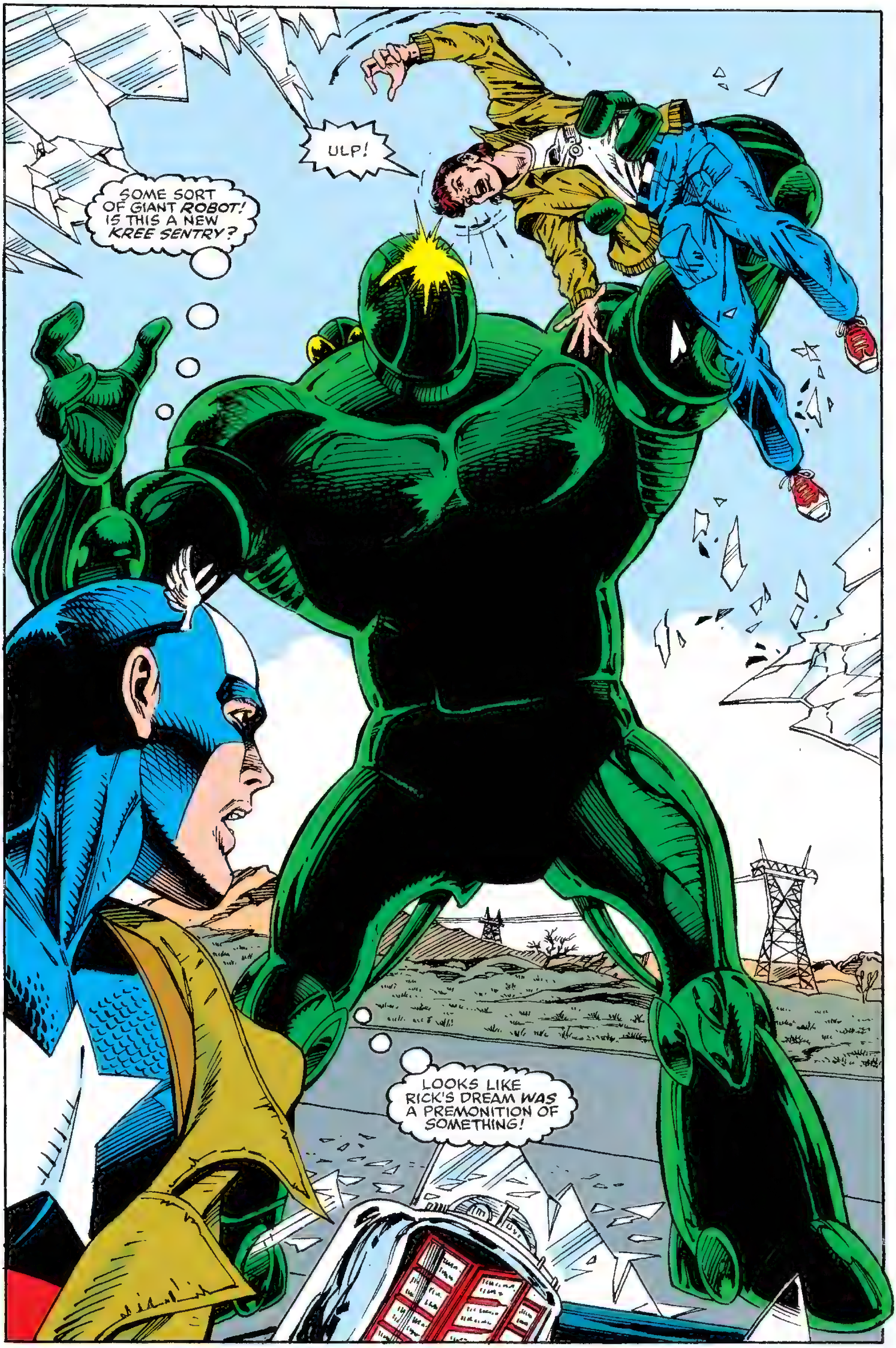

AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK CITY...
YOU'RE UP MIGHTY EARLY, MADAMOISELLE.
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU YOU COULDN'T WORK 18 HOUR DAYS ANYMORE.
WHEN I CAN'T SLEEP, I COME HERE.
YOU'VE GOT TO STOP TAKING YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES HERE TO BED WITH YOU.
WHO ELSE IS THERE?
AHEM.
WHAT HAS ME A BIT CONCERNED IS THAT YOUR FRIEND RACHEL HASN'T COME BACK FROM HER COMPUTER CLASS YET.
SHE HASN'T? IT'S FIVE IN THE MORNING! I THOUGHT SHE WAS IN BED BY NOW.
SHE TAKE HER ID CARD?
THIS IS UNLIKE HER TO STAY OUT ALL NIGHT. SHE SAY ANYTHING TO ANYBODY BEFORE SHE LEFT?
MAYBE TO JOHN.* HE DROVE HER THERE.
WONDER WHY HE DIDN'T GO PICK HER UP?
*CAP'S PILOT. --R.
GIVE ME A CALL WHEN HE GETS UP.
GOOD NIGHT, PEGGY.
RICK JONES CALLING THE AVENGERS. COME IN, SOMEBODY!

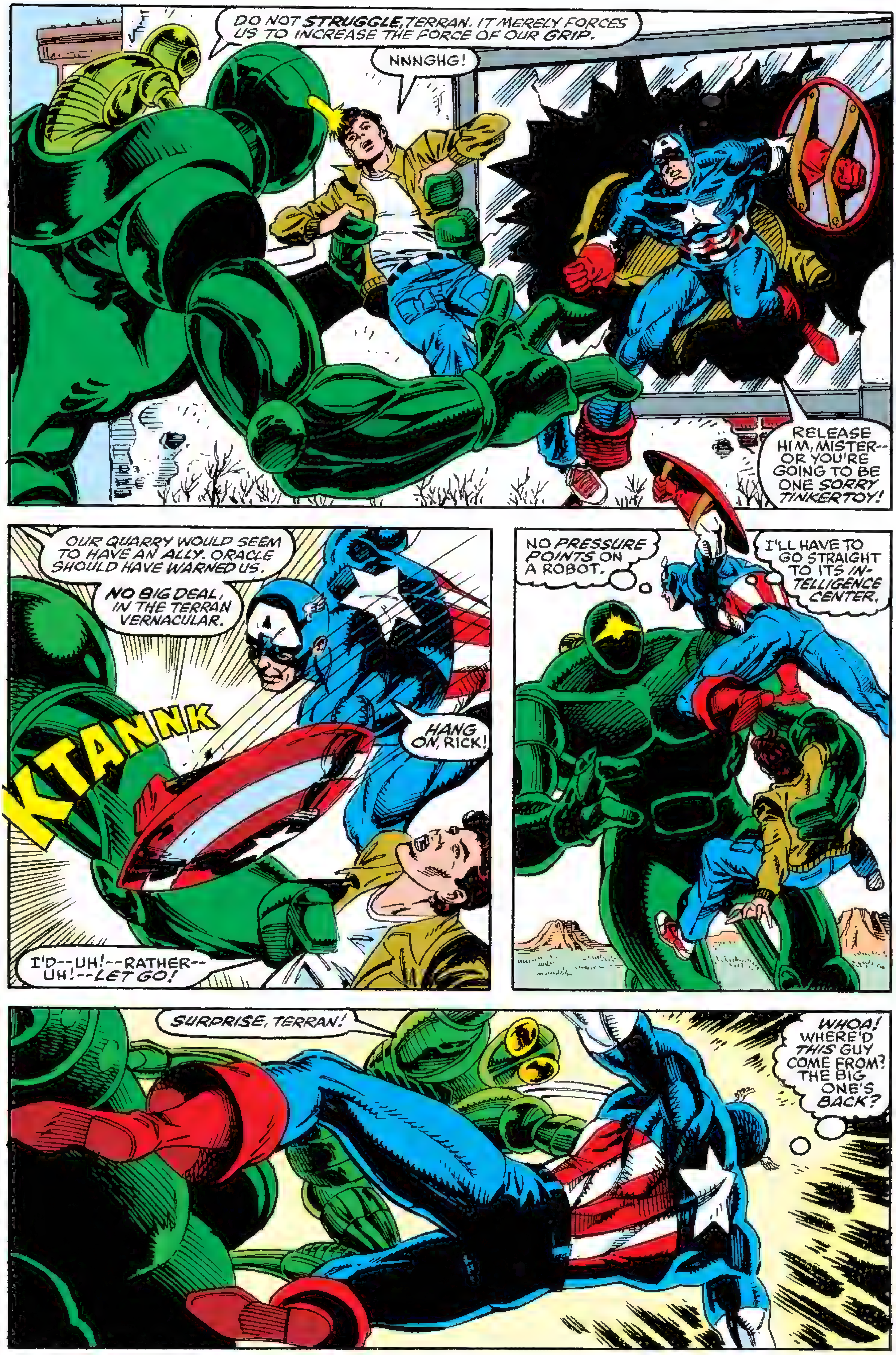

RICK?!?
PEG, PATCH ME IN A/V.*
HELLO, RICK. CAP HERE.
THIS IS A SURPRISE, ESPECIALLY AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT.
WHERE ARE YOU?
TWO TIME ZONES EARLIER THAN YOU.
YOU BUSY? OR YOU GOT A MINUTE TO HEAR SOMETHING A BIT WACKY?
*AUDIO/VIDEO. --RALFIO/MACCHIO
SHOOT.
AND...
HMMM. THE FILE WE HAVE ON THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE SAYS HE'S BEEN KNOWN TO AFFECT PEOPLE'S DREAMS FROM A GALAXY AWAY.
I THINK THIS IS SERIOUS, RICK. TELL ME WHERE I CAN MEET YOU.
WELL, LET'S SEE...
PEGGY, WAKE UP JOHN. HAVE HIM MEET ME AT THE LAUNCH SITE IN AN HOUR.
ALSO NOTIFY ME THE MOMENT YOU HEAR ANYTHING FROM RACHEL.
GOT YOU, STEVE!
CARTER
AN HOUR LATER...
WHERE TO?
BENSON, ARIZONA.


VROOSH
SAY, JOHN, DID RACHEL SAY ANYTHING TO YOU ABOUT WHERE SHE WAS GOING AFTER CLASS?
UH... NOT REALLY.
YOU DROPPED HER OFF. SHE DIDN'T TELL YOU WHY SHE DIDN'T WANT TO BE PICKED UP?
I DIDN'T ASK. I'M NOT AS CLOSE TO HER AS YOU ARE.
THAT REMINDS ME. DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE SHOWING A BIT OF NEPOTISM HIRING YOUR GIRLFRIEND AS YOUR SECRETARY?
IF YOU NEED A SECRETARY, FINE. BUT ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME SHE'S THE MOST QUALIFIED PERSON YOU CAN FIND FOR THE JOB?
WHAT'S NEXT? YOU GOING TO USE YOUR POSITION TO GET ALL YOUR OUT-OF-WORK FRIENDS A JOB?
JOHN... IS THERE SOMETHING BUGGING YOU?
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH ME! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CAN'T TAKE A LITTLE CRITICISM!
I'M SERIOUS, JOHN. TELL ME WHAT'S UP WITH YOU. I DON'T WANT PERSONAL MATTERS GETTING IN THE WAY OF--
YOU'RE MY BOSS, NOT MY SHRINK, CAPTAIN. I'M A PROFESSIONAL. PERSONAL MATTERS DON'T AFFECT MY PERFORMANCE ONE BIT.

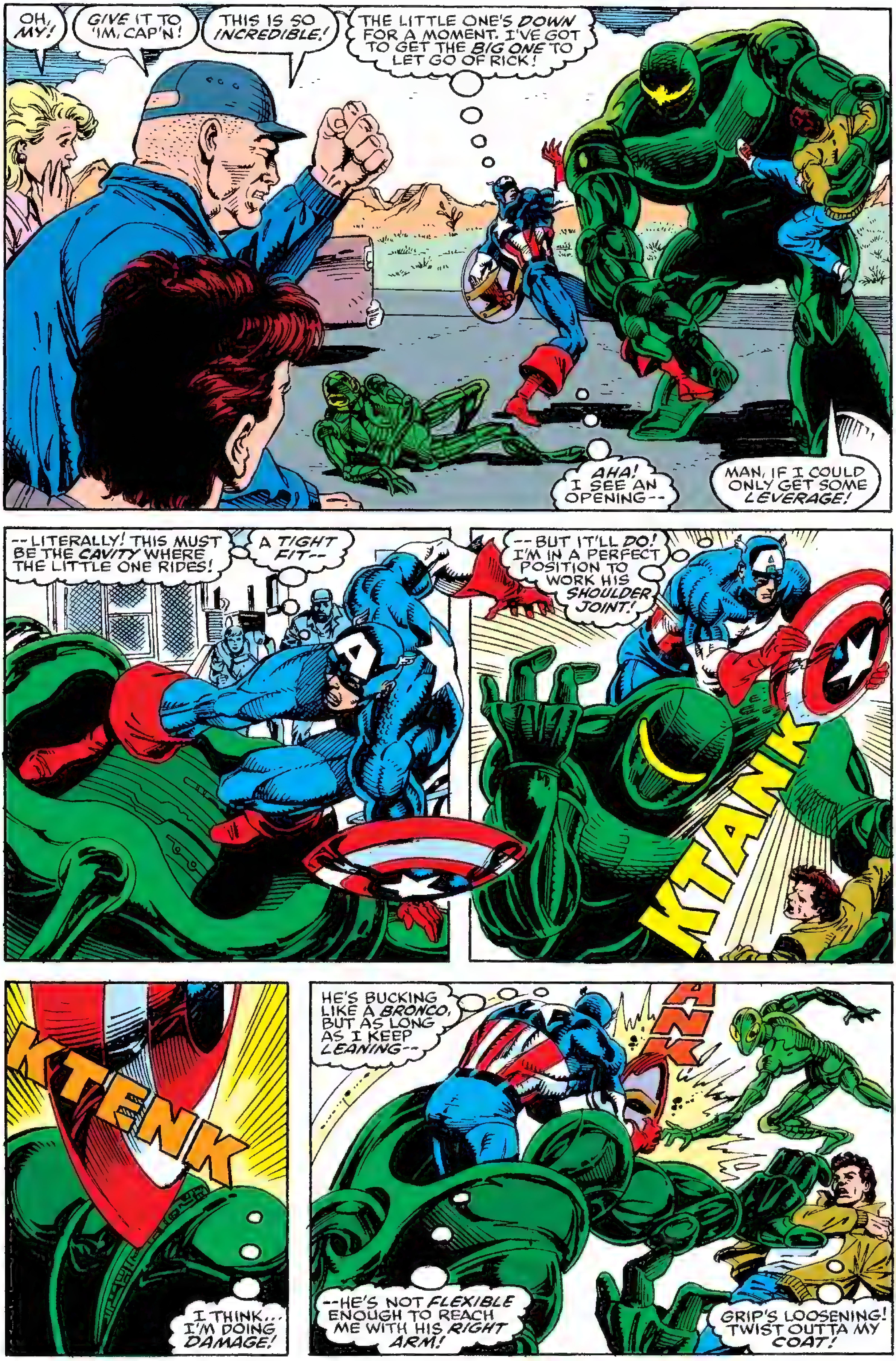

AN HOUR LATER...
I'M DISENGAGED. FIND THE NEAREST AIRPORT AND WAIT FOR ME THERE. CAP OUT.
I KNOW THE PROCEDURE, CAPTAIN. JAMESON OUT.
SOMETHING BIG'S EATING JOHN, AND HE RESISTED ALL MY EFFORTS TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS. DOES HE HAVE SOME SORT OF PROBLEM WITH ME I DON'T KNOW ABOUT?
HE'S BEEN SO SOLID AND DEPENDABLE. THIS IS SO UNLIKE HIM.
WELL, IT'S SOMETHING THAT WILL HAVE TO WAIT. RIGHT NOW I'VE GOT TO TRY TO MEND FENCES A BIT WITH RICK.
I GET THE FEELING HE'S STILL NOT OVER THAT MISUNDERSTANDING WE HAD BACK WHEN HE WAS A TEENAGER...*
DINER
*WAAAAAY BACK AFTER CAP #110-113. --MACTHUSELAH
CONSIDERING THE HOUR, THIS PLACE IS RATHER JUMPING. GUESS IT'S THE ONLY TRUCK STOP IN FIFTY MILES.
DID I BEAT RICK HERE?
HEY, FRED-- CHECK THIS OUT.
THERE HE IS.
HELLO, RICK. GREAT TO SEE YOU.
LIKEWISE.
SO WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO LATELY, BESIDES HAVING WEIRD DREAMS ABOUT ME?
OH, BIT OF THIS AND THAT.
I BOUGHT YOUR BOOK, THOUGH I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO DO MORE THAN SKIM IT.
WHAT'LL IT BE, HONEY? A LATE SUPPER OR AN EARLY BREAKFAST?
BLACK COFFEE, TWO ORDERS OF SCRAMBLED EGGS, TOAST, AND ORANGE JUICE.
COMING RIGHT UP, DOLL!

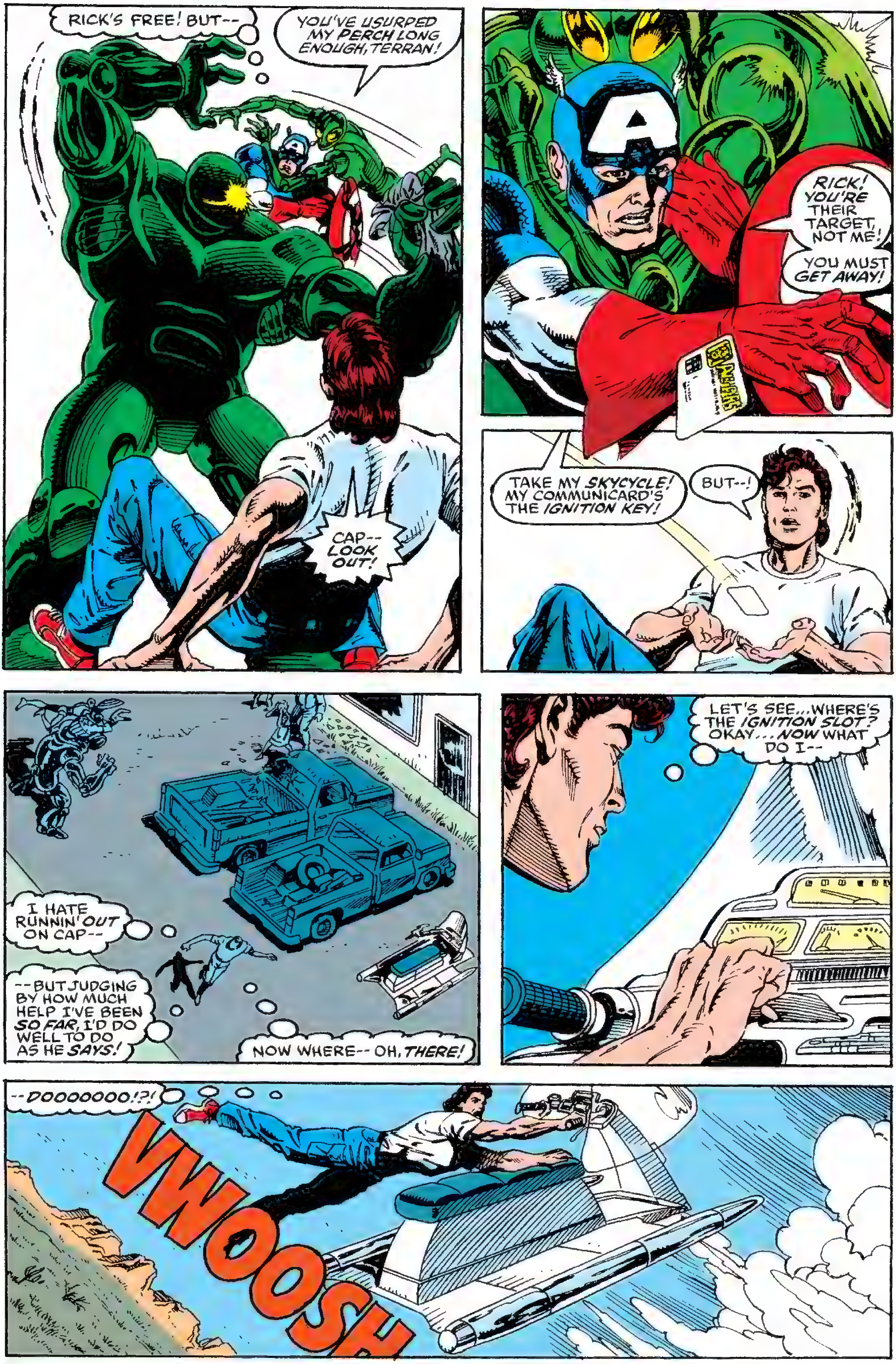

YOU'RE BACK WITH THE *HULK*, AREN'T YOU ?
YEAH. THAT'S ME. RICK JONES, PROFESSIONAL *SIDEKICK.*
HOW *IS* BRUCE THESE DAYS ?
BETTER THAN *EVER.*
ICE
UH, LOOK, CAP, I KNOW WE BOTH HAVE A *LOT* OF THINGS TO DO, SO LET ME CUT TO THE *CHASE.*
IF THIS DREAM I HAD IS A *MESSAGE* FROM THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE, I DID *MY* BIT BY TELLING YOU ABOUT IT. I WANT *OUT OF IT* FROM HERE ON.
I'VE HAD MY *FILL* OF BEING A *COSMIC PUPPET*, AND MY BOOK IS NOT EXACTLY HURTING FOR A *SEQUEL*.
I CAN *APPRECIATE* THAT, RICK, AND I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT TO GET--
EGGS AND TOAST FOR THE MAN IN THE MASK AND...
EEIIIIIEGH!
WHAT--?
KRAASH
YOW!
WHO--?

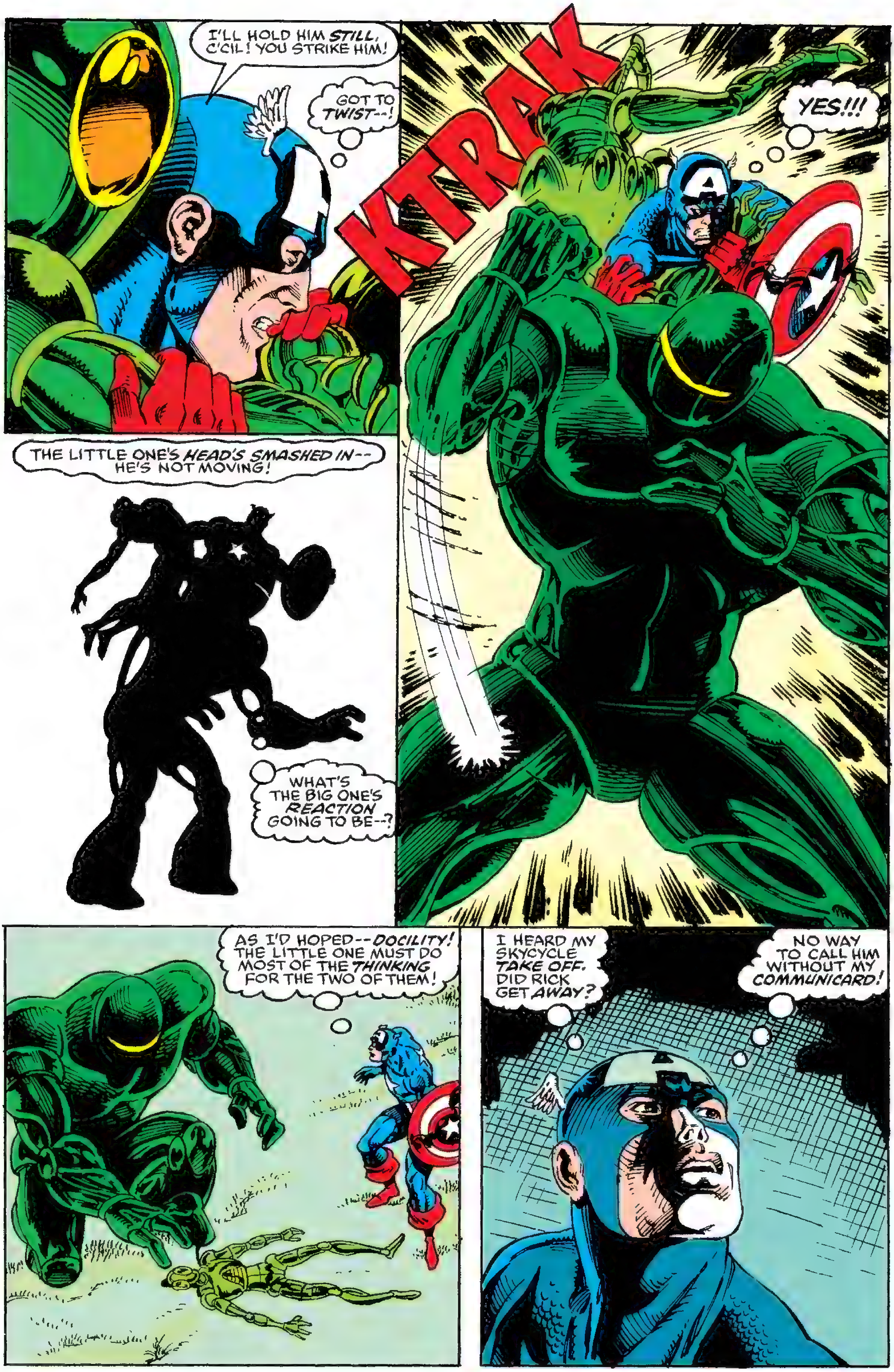

SOME SORT OF GIANT *ROBOT!* IS THIS A NEW *KREE SENTRY?*
ULP!
LOOKS LIKE RICK'S DREAM *WAS* A PREMONITION OF SOMETHING!

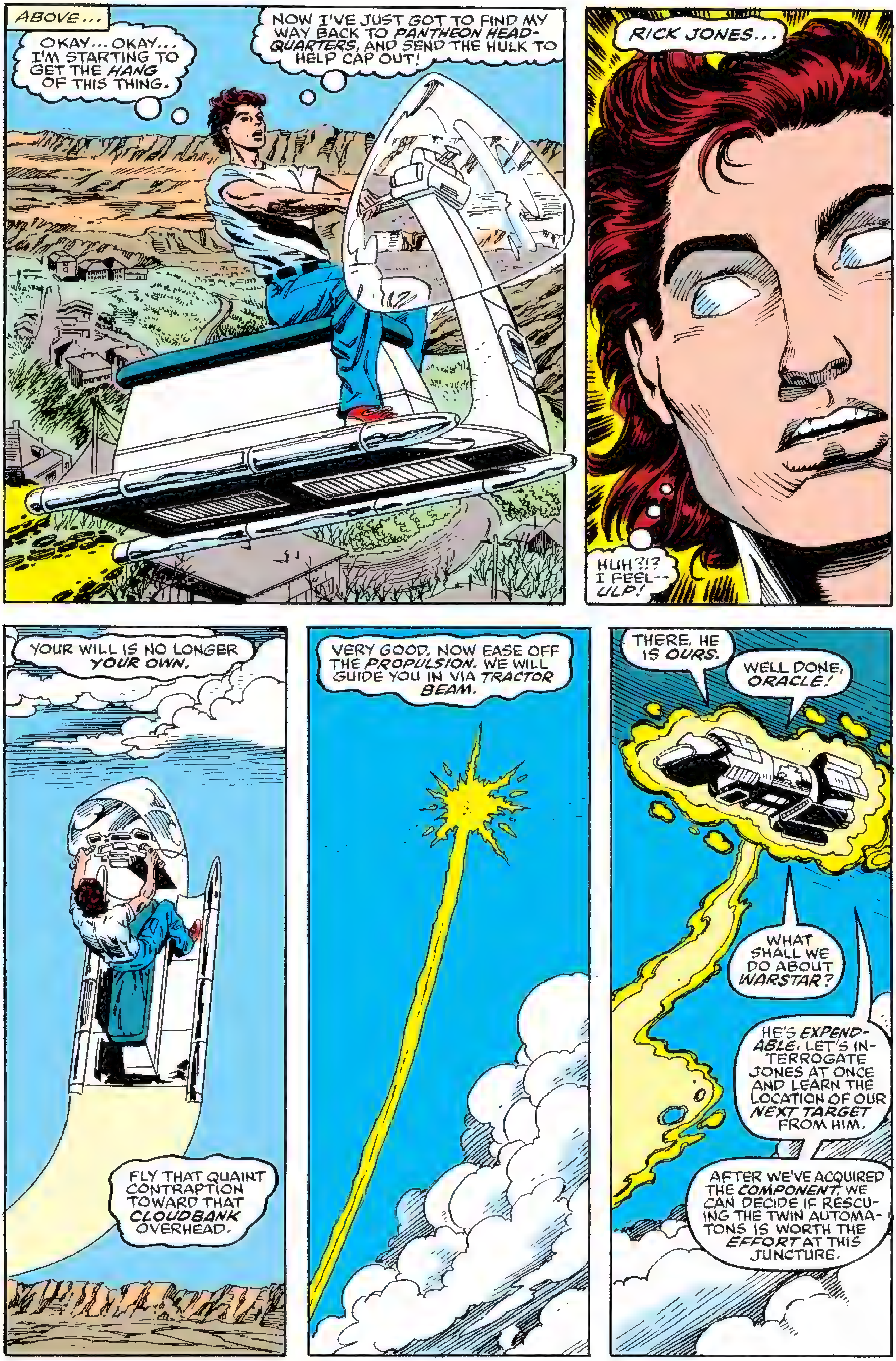

DO NOT STRUGGLE, TERRAN. IT MERELY FORCES US TO INCREASE THE FORCE OF OUR GRIP.
NNNGHG!
RELEASE HIM, MISTER-- OR YOU'RE GOING TO BE ONE SORRY TINKERTOY!
OUR QUARRY WOULD SEEM TO HAVE AN ALLY. ORACLE SHOULD HAVE WARNED US.
NO BIG DEAL, IN THE TERRAN VERNACULAR.
KTANNK
HANG ON, RICK!
I'D--UH!--RATHER-- UH!--LET GO!
NO PRESSURE POINTS ON A ROBOT.
I'LL HAVE TO GO STRAIGHT TO ITS IN-TELLIGENCE CENTER.
SURPRISE, TERRAN!
WHOA! WHERE'D THIS GUY COME FROM? THE BIG ONE'S BACK?

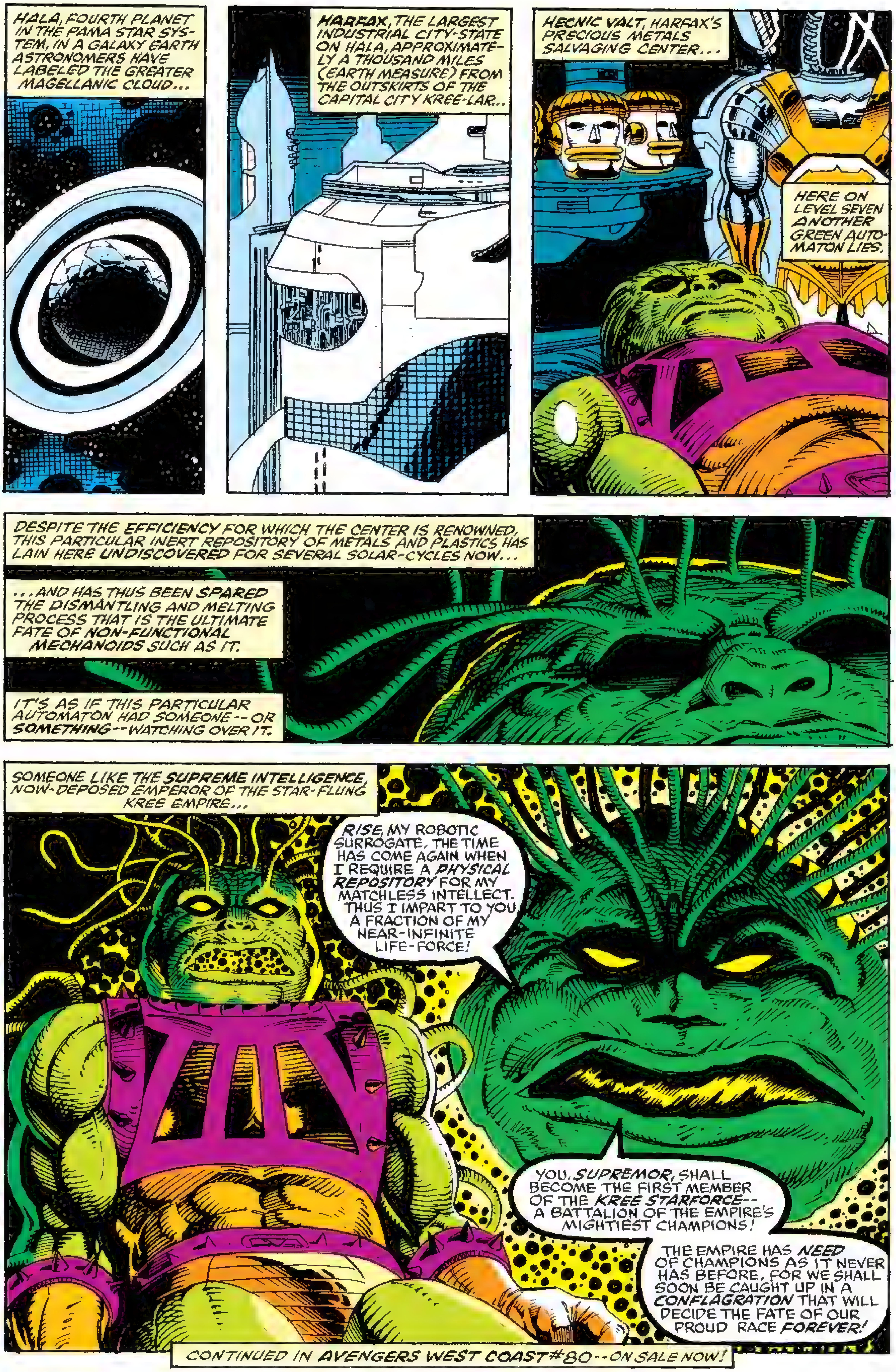
HEY, THAT'S MY--
WIRY LITTLE GUY--
--BUT HE'S NO *TERMINATOR 2!*
KRASH
C-CAP! GORT HERE BUSTING MY *RIBS!* GIMME A *HAND,* WILLYA?
SOON AS I TAKE DOWN HIS *LITTLE BUDDY!*
FOOTFIGHTING. WHAT IS IT CALLED ON YOUR PLANET? BOXKICKING, WAS IT?
HIYAA!
CAUGHT ME--!
ON *MY* PLANET, THIS IS CALLED ロレV·75!
RUNNING *CURRENT* THROUGH ME--
--GOT TO BREAK FREE BEFORE I TOUCH *GROUND!*
YES!
KTOOOM
OKAY, *KREE*-TIN-- FEEL MY *SHIELD!*
INDEED.


OH, MY!
GIVE IT TO 'IM, CAP'N!
THIS IS SO INCREDIBLE!
THE LITTLE ONE'S DOWN FOR A MOMENT. I'VE GOT TO GET THE BIG ONE TO LET GO OF RICK!
AHA! I SEE AN OPENING--
MAN, IF I COULD ONLY GET SOME LEVERAGE!
--LITERALLY! THIS MUST BE THE CAVITY WHERE THE LITTLE ONE RIDES!
A TIGHT FIT--
--BUT IT'LL DO! I'M IN A PERFECT POSITION TO WORK HIS SHOULDER JOINT!
KTANK
KTENK
I THINK... I'M DOING DAMAGE!
HE'S BUCKING LIKE A BRONCO, BUT AS LONG AS I KEEP LEANING--
ANK
--HE'S NOT FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO REACH ME WITH HIS RIGHT ARM!
GRIP'S LOOSENING! TWIST OUTTA MY COAT!


RICK'S FREE! BUT--
YOU'VE USURPED MY PERCH LONG ENOUGH, TERRAN!
CAP-- LOOK OUT!
RICK! YOU'RE THEIR TARGET, NOT ME!
YOU MUST GET AWAY!
TAKE MY SKYCYCLE! MY COMMUNICARD'S THE IGNITION KEY!
BUT--!
I HATE RUNNIN' OUT ON CAP--
--BUT JUDGING BY HOW MUCH HELP I'VE BEEN SO FAR, I'D DO WELL TO DO AS HE SAYS!
NOW WHERE-- OH, THERE!
LET'S SEE... WHERE'S THE IGNITION SLOT? OKAY... NOW WHAT DO I--
--DOOOOOOO!?!
VWOOSH


I'LL HOLD HIM *STILL*, C'CIL! YOU STRIKE HIM!
GOT TO *TWIST*--!
KTRAK
YES!!!
THE LITTLE ONE'S *HEAD'S SMASHED IN*-- HE'S NOT MOVING!
WHAT'S THE BIG ONE'S *REACTION* GOING TO BE--?
AS I'D HOPED--*DOCILITY*! THE LITTLE ONE MUST DO MOST OF THE *THINKING* FOR THE TWO OF THEM!
I HEARD MY SKYCYCLE *TAKE OFF*. DID RICK GET *AWAY*?
NO WAY TO CALL HIM WITHOUT MY *COMMUNICARD*!


ABOVE...
OKAY... OKAY... I'M STARTING TO GET THE *HANG* OF THIS THING.
NOW I'VE JUST GOT TO FIND MY WAY BACK TO *PANTHEON HEADQUARTERS*, AND SEND THE HULK TO HELP CAP OUT!
RICK JONES...
HUH?!? I FEEL-- *ULP!*
YOUR WILL IS NO LONGER *YOUR OWN*.
FLY THAT QUAINT CONTRAPTION TOWARD THAT *CLOUDBANK* OVERHEAD.
VERY GOOD. NOW EASE OFF THE *PROPULSION*. WE WILL GUIDE YOU IN VIA *TRACTOR BEAM*.
THERE. HE IS *OURS*.
WELL DONE, *ORACLE!*
WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT *WARSTAR?*
HE'S *EXPENDABLE*. LET'S INTERROGATE JONES AT ONCE AND LEARN THE LOCATION OF OUR *NEXT TARGET* FROM HIM.
AFTER WE'VE ACQUIRED THE *COMPONENT*, WE CAN DECIDE IF RESCUING THE TWIN AUTOMATONS IS WORTH THE *EFFORT* AT THIS JUNCTURE.


HALA, FOURTH PLANET IN THE PAMA STAR SYSTEM, IN A GALAXY EARTH ASTRONOMERS HAVE LABELED THE GREATER MAGELLANIC CLOUD...
HARFAX, THE LARGEST INDUSTRIAL CITY-STATE ON HALA, APPROXIMATELY A THOUSAND MILES (EARTH MEASURE) FROM THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITAL CITY KREE-LAR...
HECNIC VALT, HARFAX'S PRECIOUS METALS SALVAGING CENTER...
HERE ON LEVEL SEVEN ANOTHER GREEN AUTOMATON LIES.
DESPITE THE EFFICIENCY FOR WHICH THE CENTER IS RENOWNED, THIS PARTICULAR INERT REPOSITORY OF METALS AND PLASTICS HAS LAIN HERE UNDISCOVERED FOR SEVERAL SOLAR-CYCLES NOW...
...AND HAS THUS BEEN SPARED THE DISMANTLING AND MELTING PROCESS THAT IS THE ULTIMATE FATE OF NON-FUNCTIONAL MECHANOIDS SUCH AS IT.
IT'S AS IF THIS PARTICULAR AUTOMATON HAD SOMEONE--OR SOMETHING--WATCHING OVER IT.
SOMEONE LIKE THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE, NOW-DEPOSED EMPEROR OF THE STAR-FLUNG KREE EMPIRE...
RISE, MY ROBOTIC SURROGATE. THE TIME HAS COME AGAIN WHEN I REQUIRE A PHYSICAL REPOSITORY FOR MY MATCHLESS INTELLECT. THUS I IMPART TO YOU A FRACTION OF MY NEAR-INFINITE LIFE-FORCE!
YOU, SUPREMOR, SHALL BECOME THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE KREE STARFORCE-- A BATTALION OF THE EMPIRE'S MIGHTIEST CHAMPIONS!
THE EMPIRE HAS NEED OF CHAMPIONS AS IT NEVER HAS BEFORE, FOR WE SHALL SOON BE CAUGHT UP IN A CONFLAGRATION THAT WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF OUR PROUD RACE FOREVER!

CONTINUED IN AVENGERS WEST COAST #80--ON SALE NOW!

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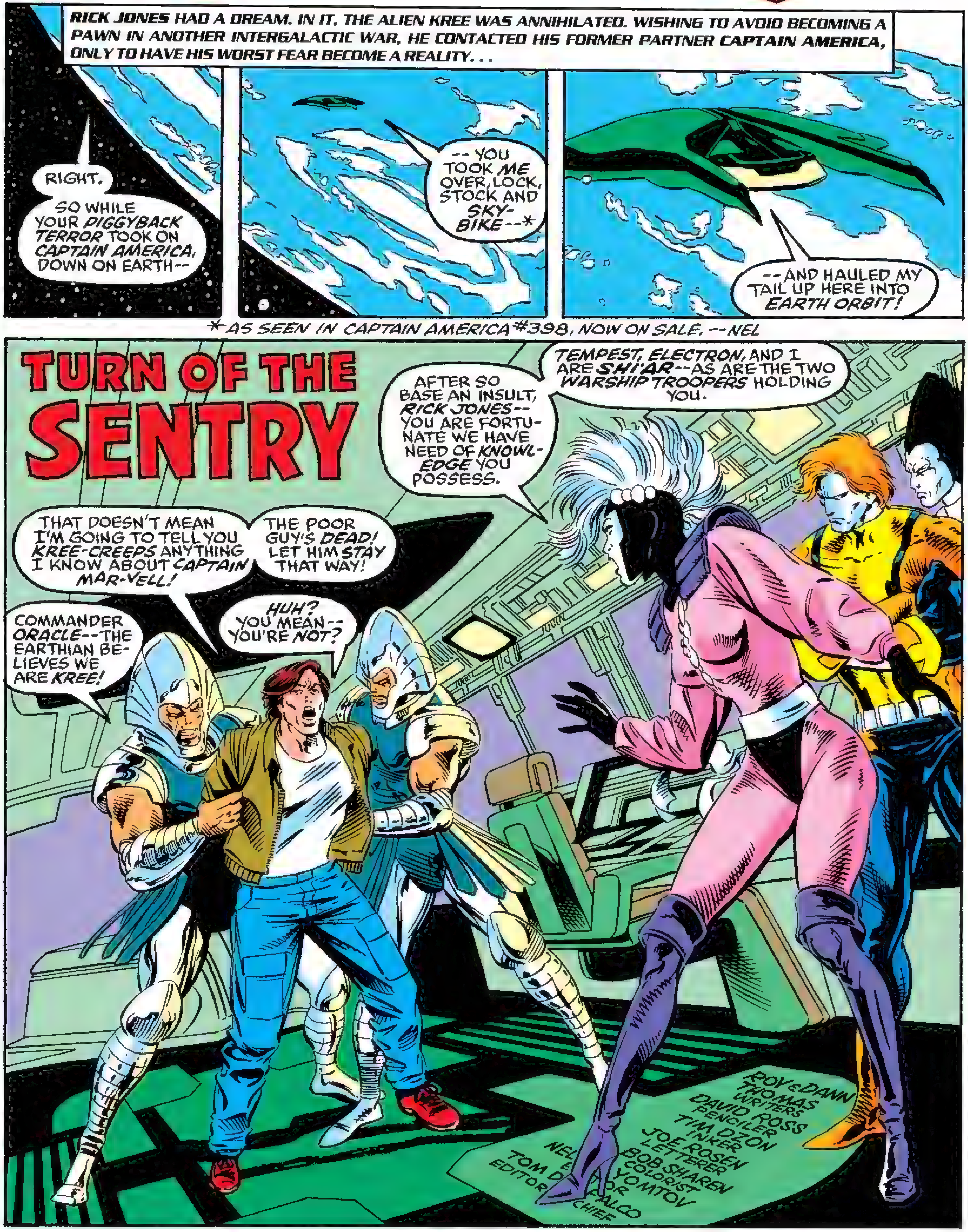
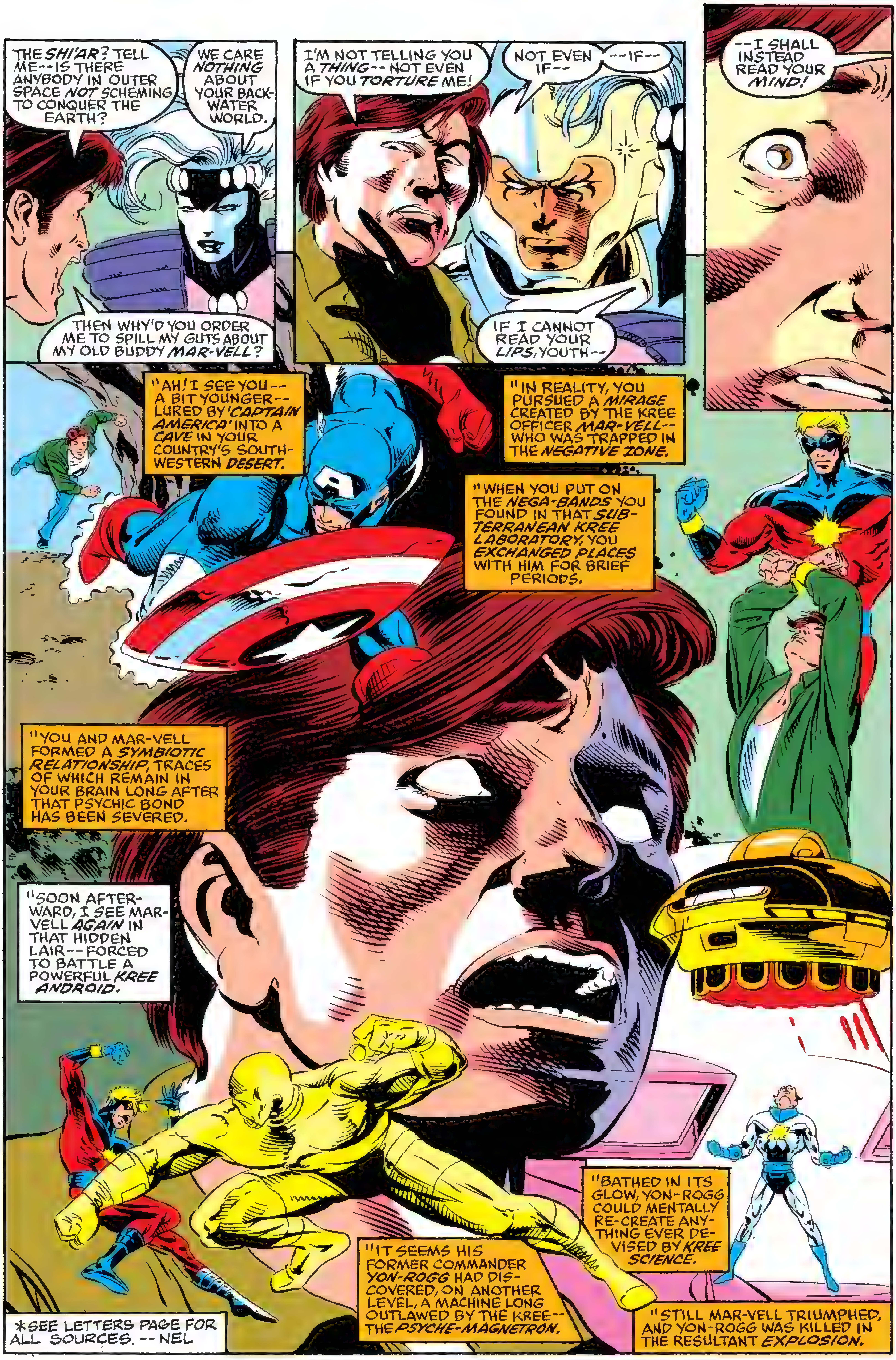
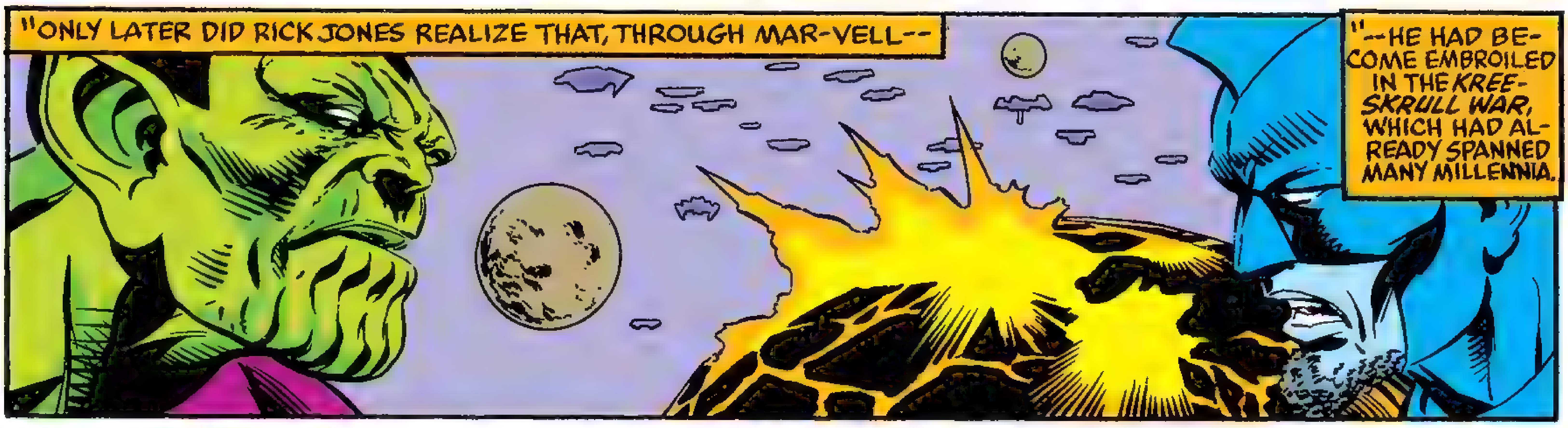
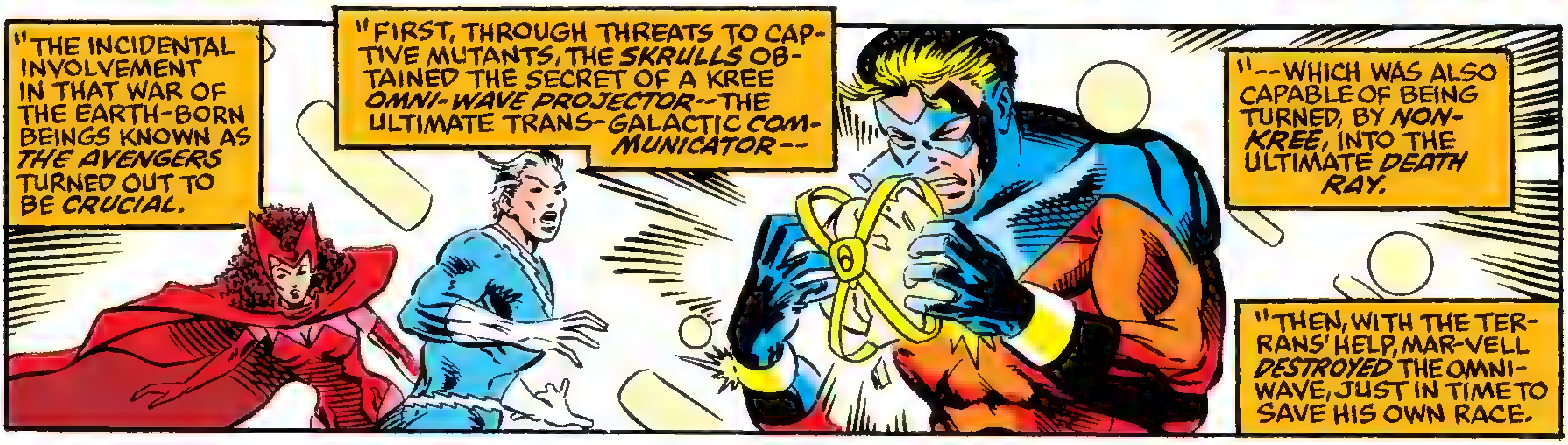
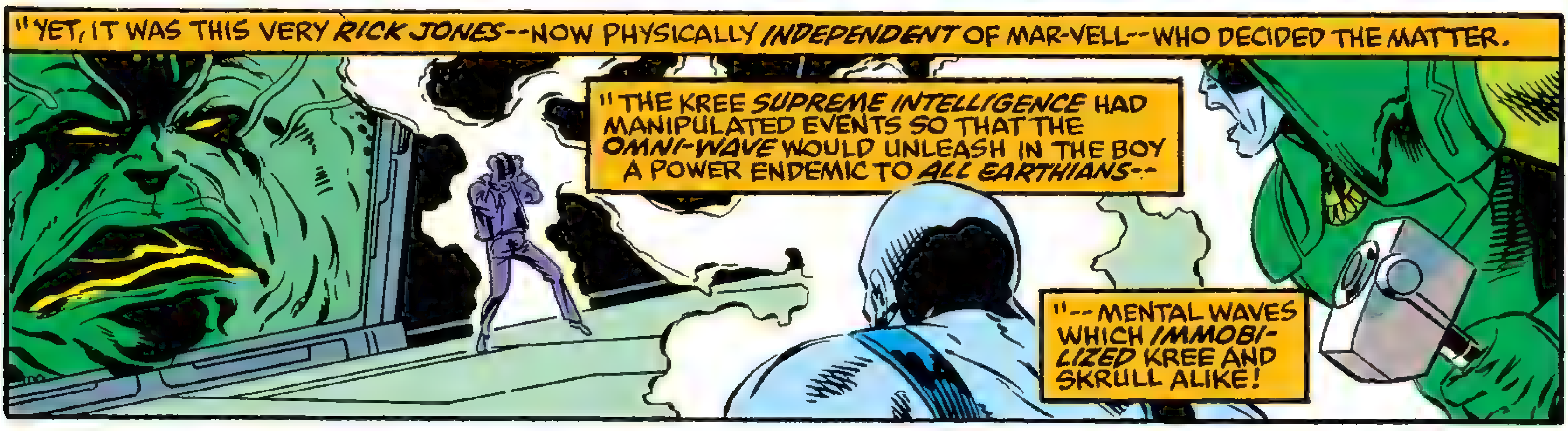
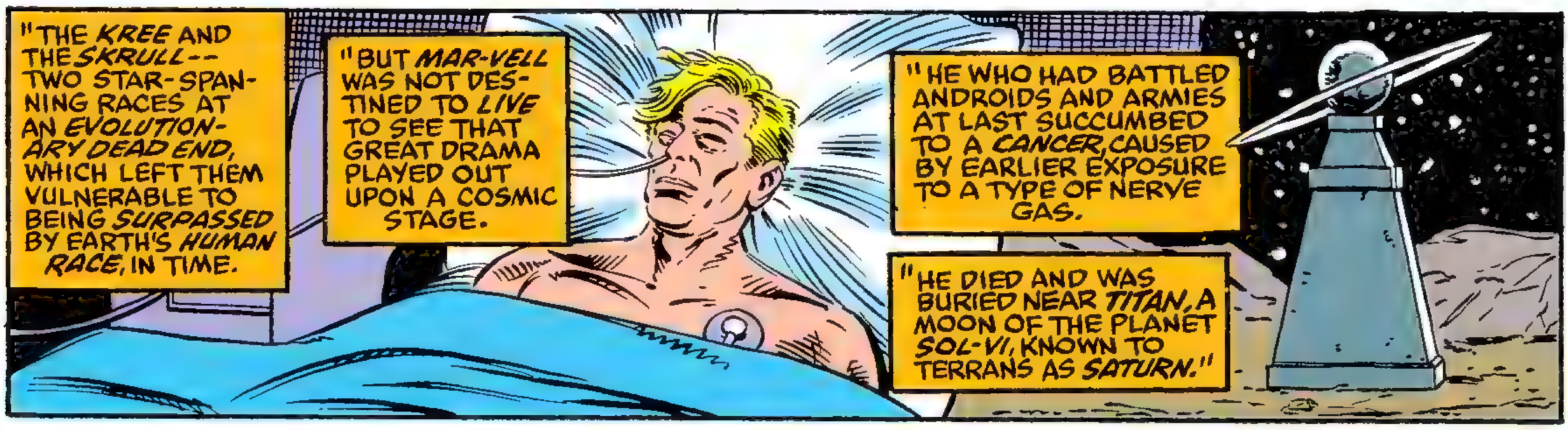

RICK JONES HAD A DREAM. IN IT, THE ALIEN KREE WAS ANNIHILATED. WISHING TO AVOID BECOMING A PAWN IN ANOTHER INTERGALACTIC WAR, HE CONTACTED HIS FORMER PARTNER CAPTAIN AMERICA, ONLY TO HAVE HIS WORST FEAR BECOME A REALITY. . .
RIGHT. SO WHILE YOUR PIGGYBACK TERROR TOOK ON CAPTAIN AMERICA, DOWN ON EARTH--
--YOU TOOK ME OVER, LOCK, STOCK AND SKY-BIKE--*
--AND HAULED MY TAIL UP HERE INTO EARTH ORBIT!
*AS SEEN IN CAPTAIN AMERICA #398, NOW ON SALE. --NEL
TURN OF THE SENTRY
AFTER SO BASE AN INSULT, RICK JONES-- YOU ARE FORTUNATE WE HAVE NEED OF KNOWLEDGE YOU POSSESS.
TEMPEST, ELECTRON, AND I ARE SHI'AR--AS ARE THE TWO WARSHIP TROOPERS HOLDING YOU.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M GOING TO TELL YOU KREE-CREEPS ANYTHING I KNOW ABOUT CAPTAIN MAR-VELL!
THE POOR GUY'S DEAD! LET HIM STAY THAT WAY!
COMMANDER ORACLE--THE EARTHIAN BELIEVES WE ARE KREE!
HUH? YOU MEAN-- YOU'RE NOT?
ROY & DANN THOMAS WRITERS
DAVID ROSS PENCILER
TIM DZON INKER
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
BOB SHAREN COLORIST
NEL YOMTOV E OR
TOM D FALCO EDITOR CHIEF

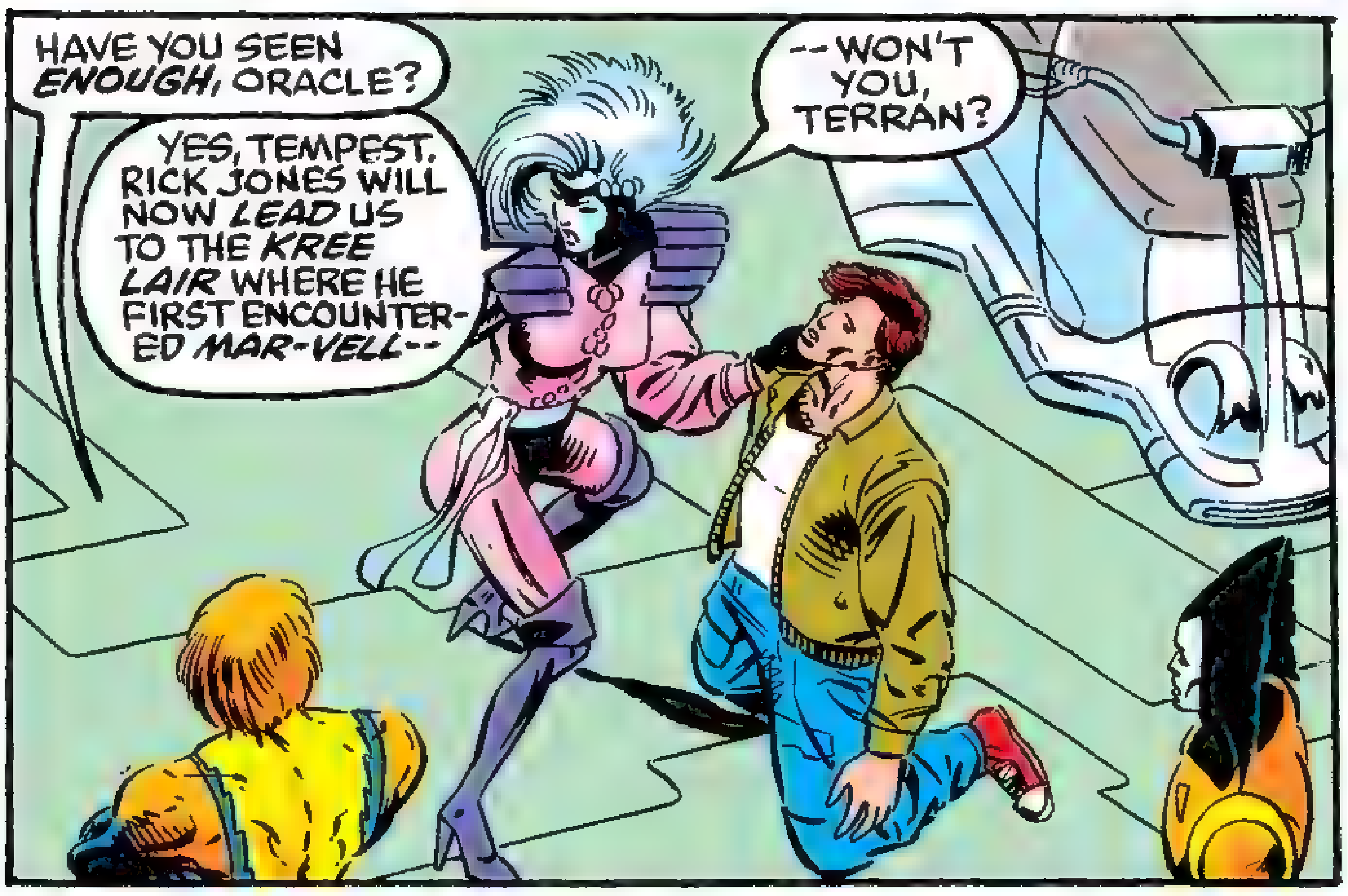

THE SHI'AR? TELL ME--IS THERE ANYBODY IN OUTER SPACE NOT SCHEMING TO CONQUER THE EARTH?
WE CARE NOTHING ABOUT YOUR BACKWATER WORLD.
THEN WHY'D YOU ORDER ME TO SPILL MY GUTS ABOUT MY OLD BUDDY MAR-VELL?
I'M NOT TELLING YOU A THING--NOT EVEN IF YOU TORTURE ME!
NOT EVEN IF--
--IF--
IF I CANNOT READ YOUR LIPS, YOUTH--
--I SHALL INSTEAD READ YOUR MIND!
"AH! I SEE YOU--A BIT YOUNGER--LURED BY 'CAPTAIN AMERICA' INTO A CAVE IN YOUR COUNTRY'S SOUTHWESTERN DESERT.
"IN REALITY, YOU PURSUED A MIRAGE CREATED BY THE KREE OFFICER MAR-VELL--WHO WAS TRAPPED IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE.
"WHEN YOU PUT ON THE NEGA-BANDS YOU FOUND IN THAT SUBTERRANEAN KREE LABORATORY, YOU EXCHANGED PLACES WITH HIM FOR BRIEF PERIODS.
"YOU AND MAR-VELL FORMED A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP, TRACES OF WHICH REMAIN IN YOUR BRAIN LONG AFTER THAT PSYCHIC BOND HAS BEEN SEVERED.
"SOON AFTERWARD, I SEE MAR-VELL AGAIN IN THAT HIDDEN LAIR--FORCED TO BATTLE A POWERFUL KREE ANDROID.
"IT SEEMS HIS FORMER COMMANDER YON-ROGG HAD DISCOVERED, ON ANOTHER LEVEL, A MACHINE LONG OUTLAWED BY THE KREE--THE PSYCHE-MAGNETRON.
"BATHED IN ITS GLOW, YON-ROGG COULD MENTALLY RE-CREATE ANYTHING EVER DEVISED BY KREE SCIENCE.
"STILL MAR-VELL TRIUMPHED, AND YON-ROGG WAS KILLED IN THE RESULTANT EXPLOSION.
*SEE LETTERS PAGE FOR ALL SOURCES. --NEL

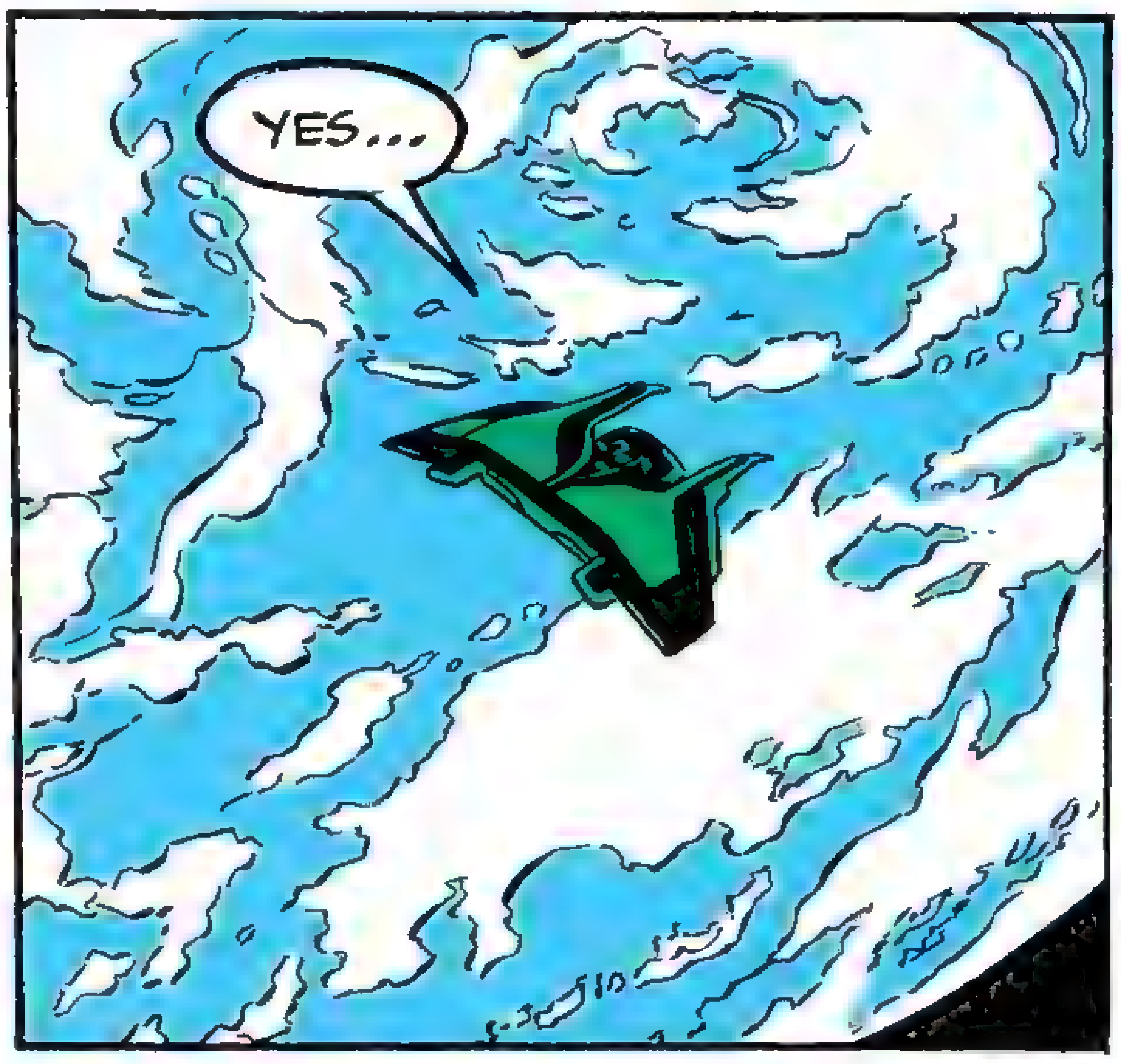

"ONLY LATER DID RICK JONES REALIZE THAT, THROUGH MAR-VELL--
"--HE HAD BECOME EMBROILED IN THE *KREE-SKRULL WAR*, WHICH HAD ALREADY SPANNED MANY MILLENNIA.

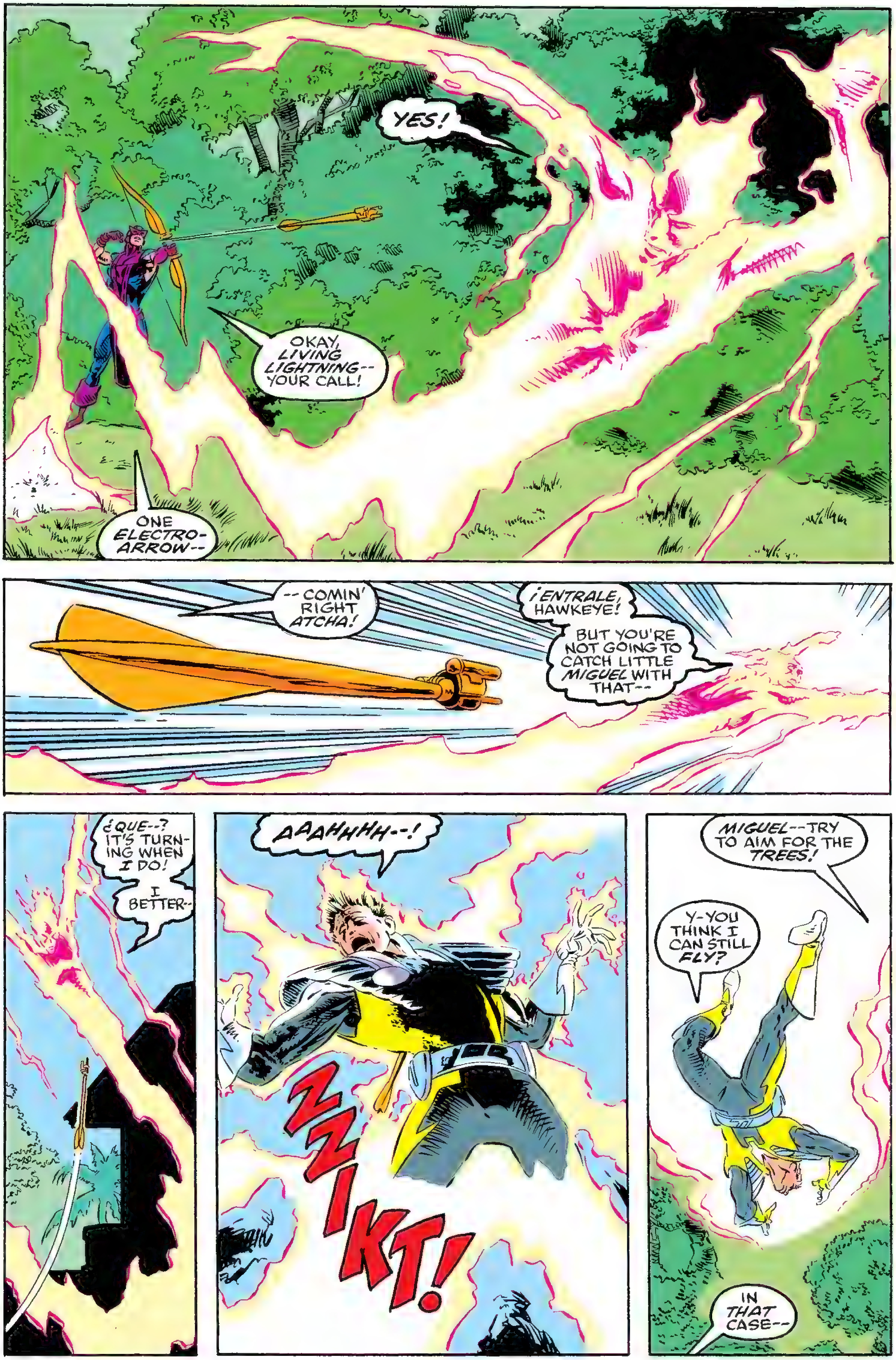

"THE INCIDENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THAT WAR OF THE EARTH-BORN BEINGS KNOWN AS *THE AVENGERS* TURNED OUT TO BE *CRUCIAL*.
"FIRST, THROUGH THREATS TO CAPTIVE MUTANTS, THE *SKRULLS* OBTAINED THE SECRET OF A KREE *OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR*--THE ULTIMATE TRANS-GALACTIC *COMMUNICATOR*--
"--WHICH WAS ALSO CAPABLE OF BEING TURNED, BY *NON-KREE*, INTO THE ULTIMATE *DEATH RAY*.
"THEN, WITH THE TERRANS' HELP, MAR-VELL *DESTROYED* THE OMNI-WAVE, JUST IN TIME TO SAVE HIS OWN RACE.

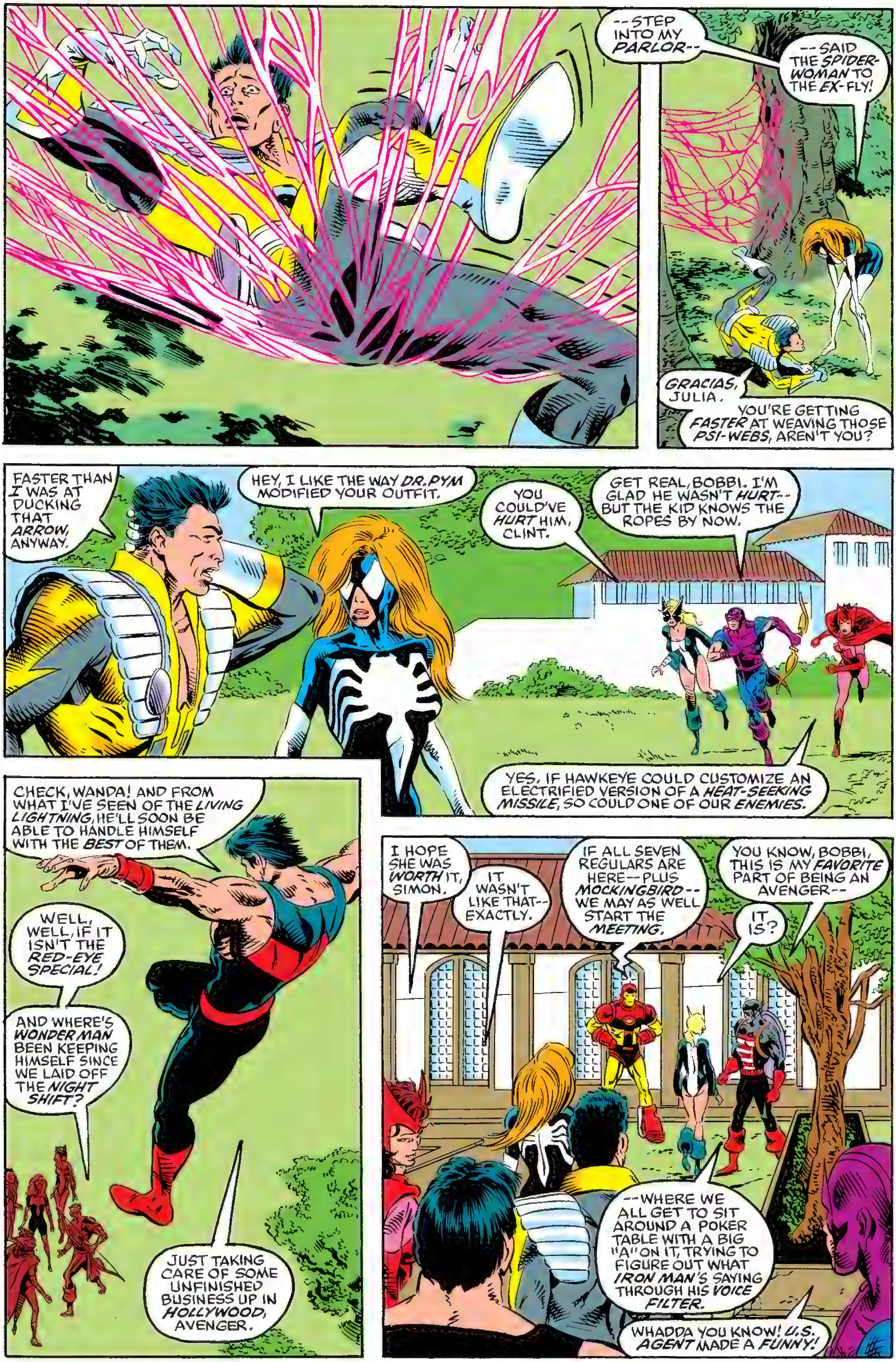

"YET, IT WAS THIS VERY *RICK JONES*--NOW PHYSICALLY *INDEPENDENT* OF MAR-VELL--WHO DECIDED THE MATTER.
"THE KREE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE* HAD MANIPULATED EVENTS SO THAT THE *OMNI-WAVE* WOULD UNLEASH IN THE BOY A POWER ENDEMIC TO *ALL EARTHIANS*--
"--MENTAL WAVES WHICH *IMMOBILIZED* KREE AND SKRULL ALIKE!

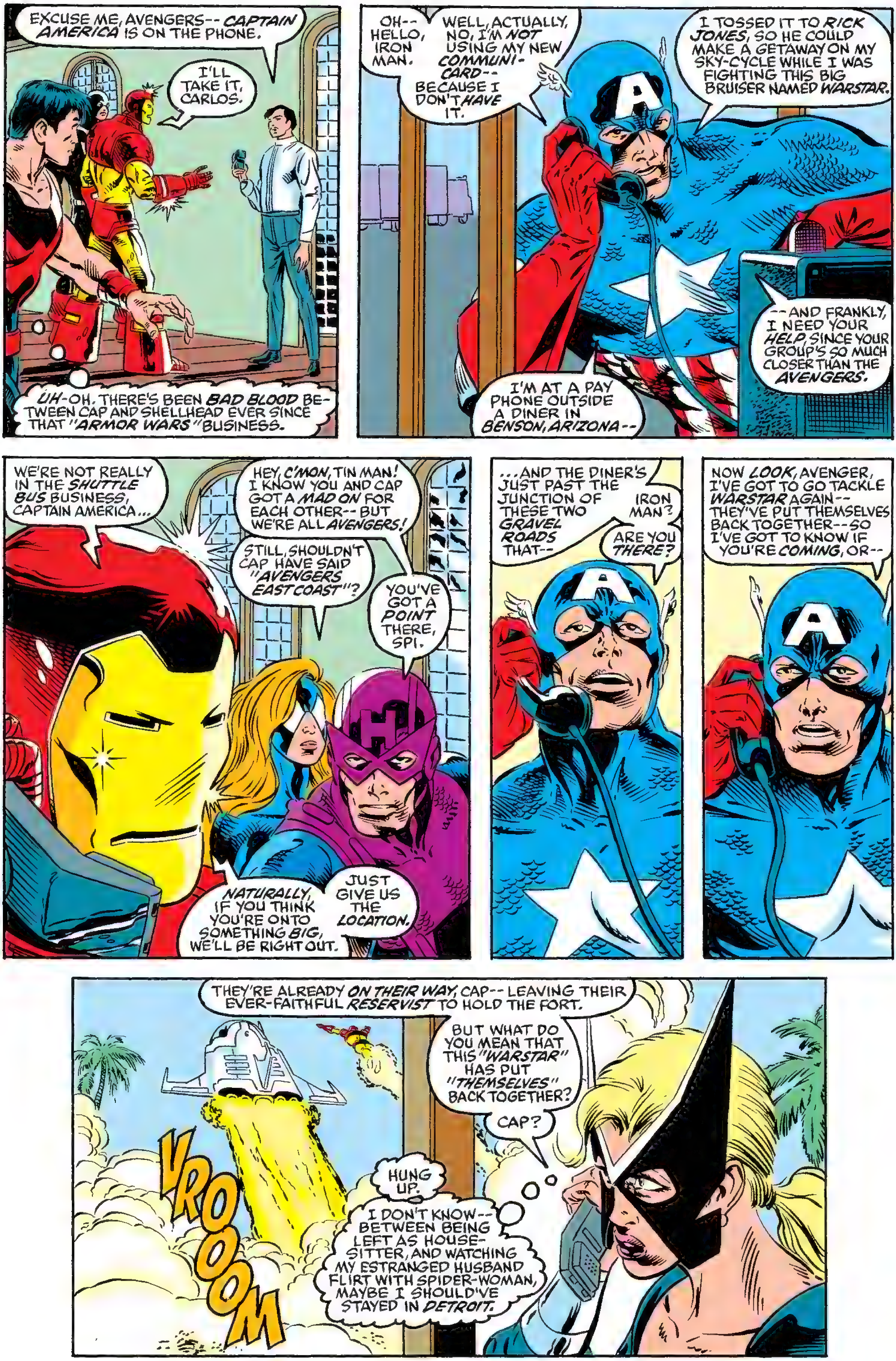

"THE *KREE* AND THE *SKRULL*--TWO STAR-SPANNING RACES AT AN *EVOLUTIONARY DEAD END*, WHICH LEFT THEM VULNERABLE TO BEING *SURPASSED* BY EARTH'S *HUMAN RACE*, IN TIME.
"BUT *MAR-VELL* WAS NOT DESTINED TO *LIVE* TO SEE THAT GREAT DRAMA PLAYED OUT UPON A COSMIC STAGE.
"HE WHO HAD BATTLED ANDROIDS AND ARMIES AT LAST SUCCUMBED TO A *CANCER*, CAUSED BY EARLIER EXPOSURE TO A TYPE OF NERVE GAS.
"HE DIED AND WAS BURIED NEAR *TITAN*, A MOON OF THE PLANET *SOL-VI*, KNOWN TO TERRANS AS *SATURN*."

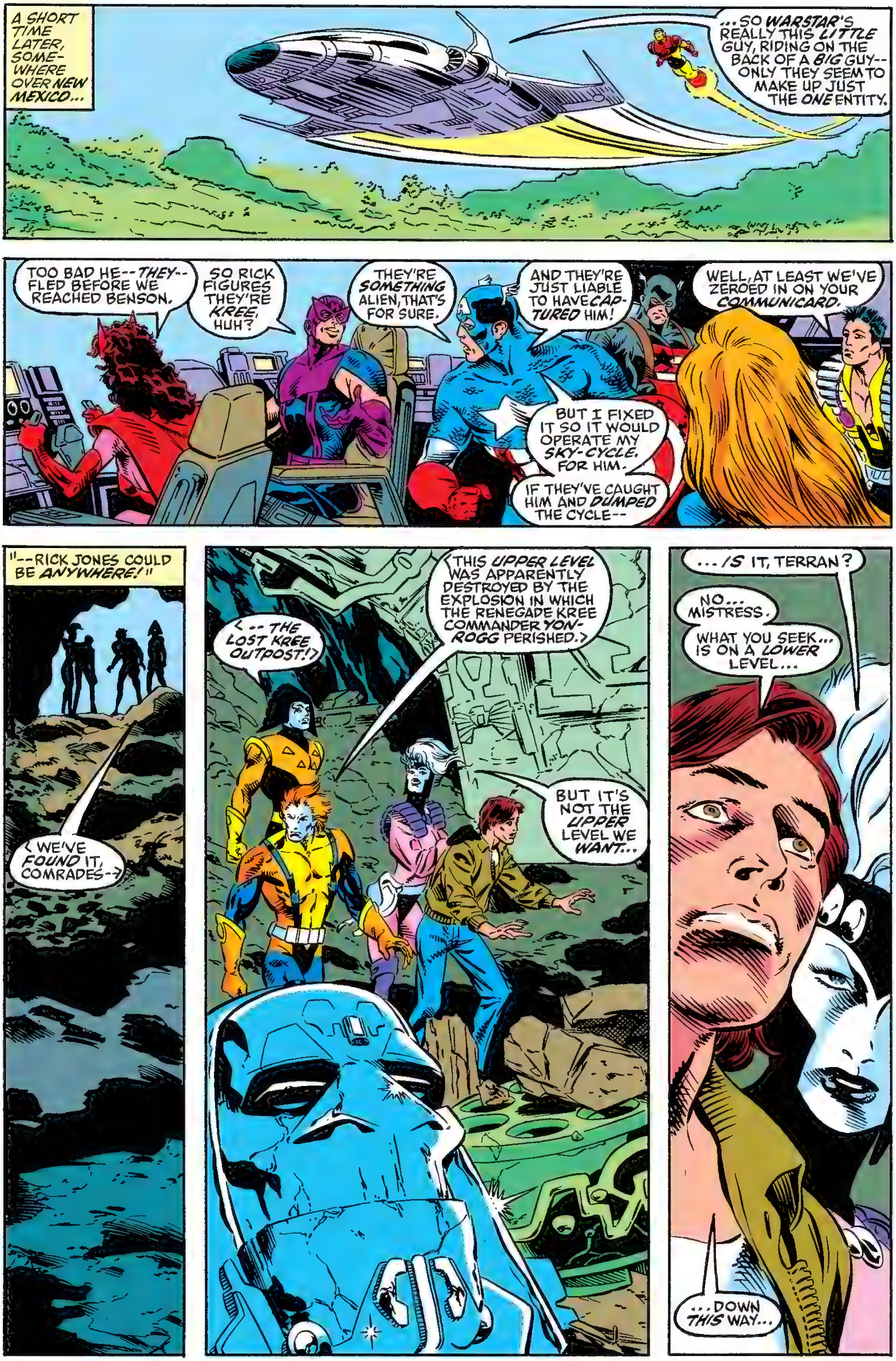

HAVE YOU SEEN *ENOUGH*, ORACLE?
YES, TEMPEST. RICK JONES WILL NOW *LEAD* US TO THE *KREE LAIR* WHERE HE FIRST ENCOUNTERED *MAR-VELL*--
--WON'T YOU, TERRAN?

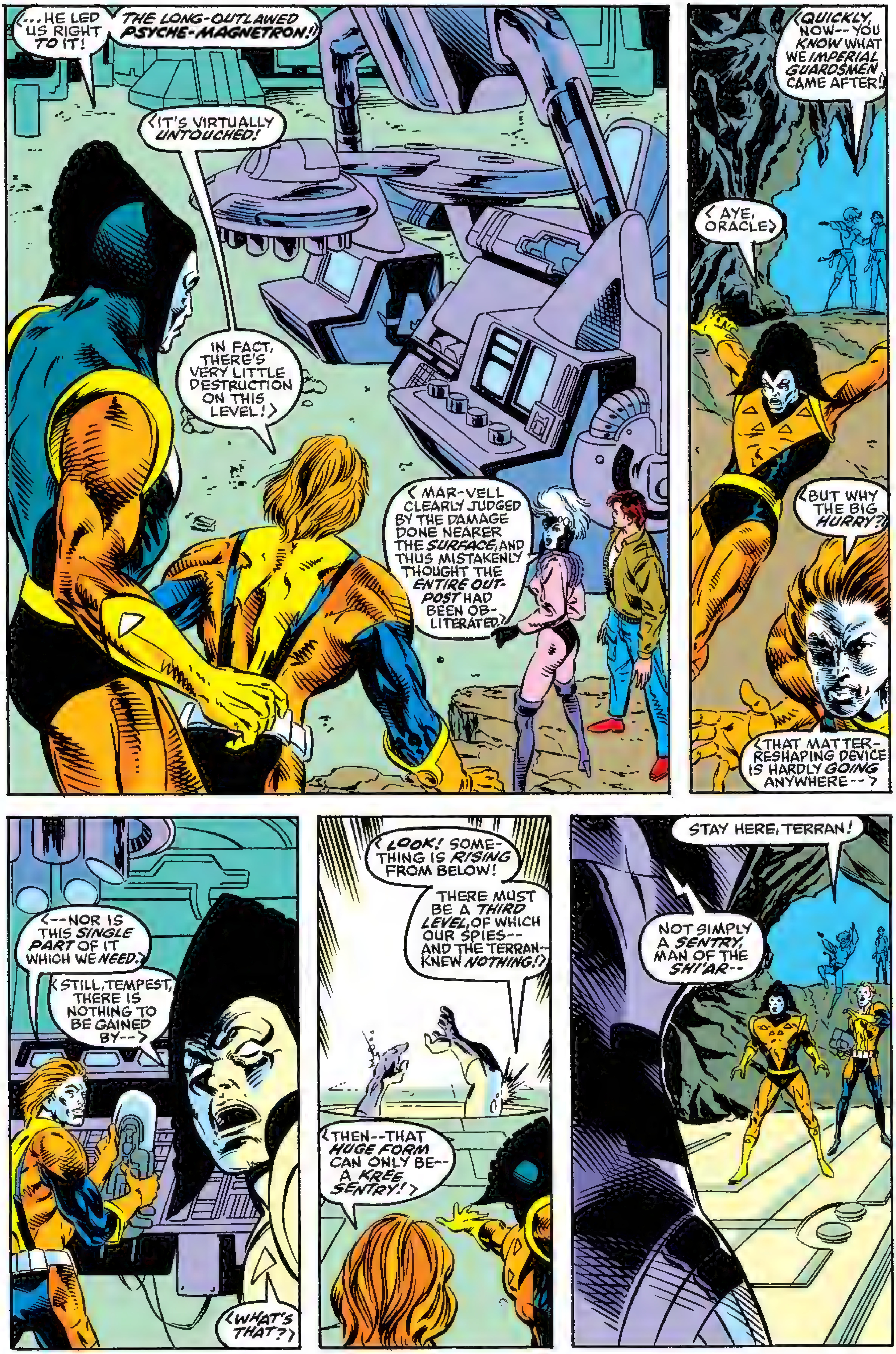

YES...

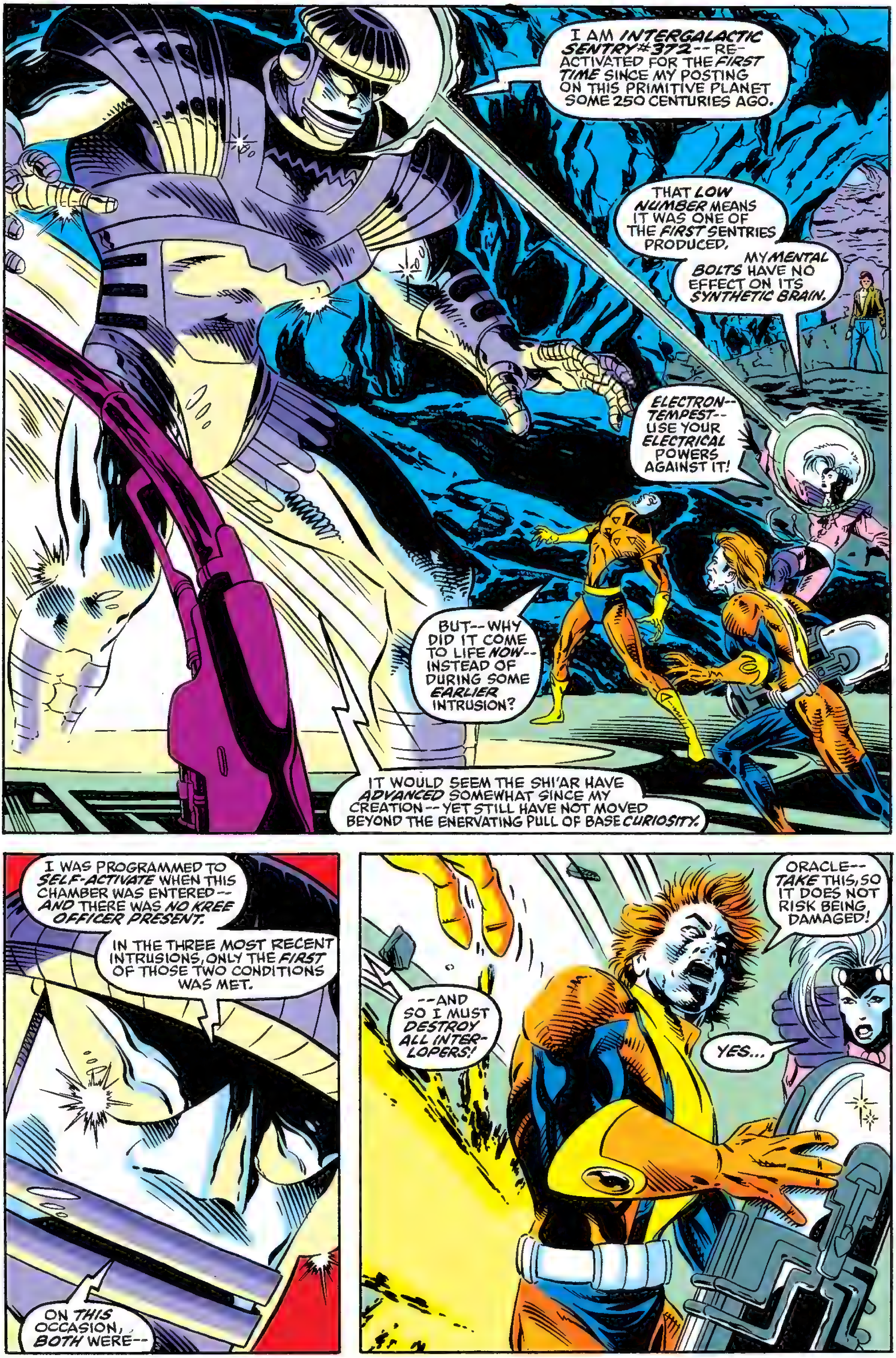

YES!
OKAY, LIVING LIGHTNING-- YOUR CALL!
ONE ELECTRO-ARROW--
--COMIN' RIGHT ATCHA!
¡ENTRALE, HAWKEYE!
BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CATCH LITTLE MIGUEL WITH THAT--
¿QUE--? IT'S TURNING WHEN I DO!
I BETTER--
AAAHHHH--!
ZZIKT!
MIGUEL--TRY TO AIM FOR THE TREES!
Y-YOU THINK I CAN STILL FLY?
IN THAT CASE--

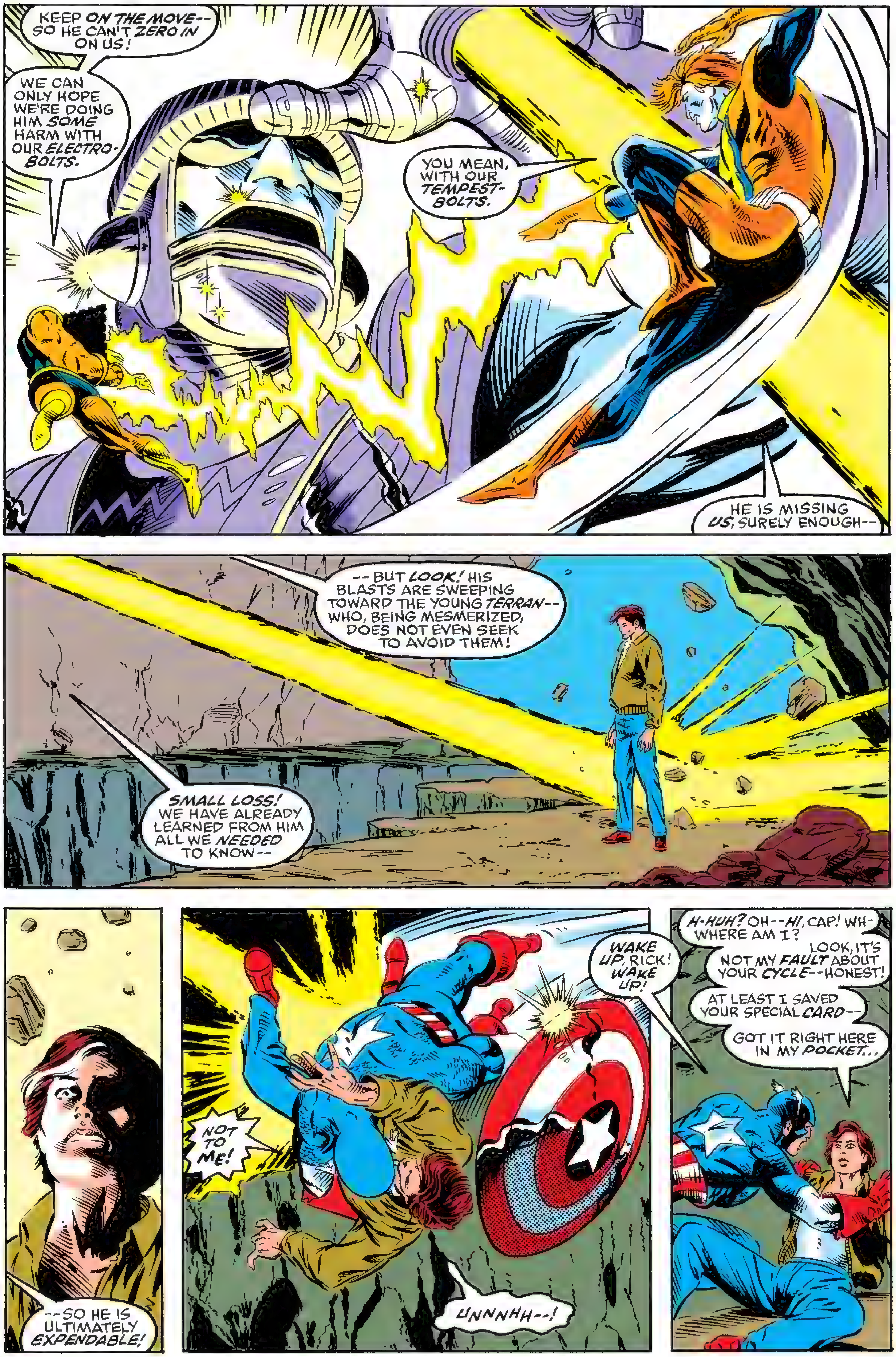

--STEP INTO MY *PARLOR*--
--SAID THE *SPIDER-WOMAN* TO THE *EX*-FLY!
GRACIAS, JULIA.
YOU'RE GETTING *FASTER* AT WEAVING THOSE *PSI-WEBS*, AREN'T YOU?
FASTER THAN *I* WAS AT DUCKING THAT *ARROW*, ANYWAY.
HEY, I LIKE THE WAY *DR. PYM* MODIFIED YOUR OUTFIT.
YOU COULD'VE *HURT* HIM, CLINT.
GET REAL, BOBBI. I'M GLAD HE WASN'T *HURT*--BUT THE KID KNOWS THE ROPES BY NOW.
YES. IF HAWKEYE COULD CUSTOMIZE AN ELECTRIFIED VERSION OF A *HEAT-SEEKING MISSILE*, SO COULD ONE OF OUR *ENEMIES*.
CHECK, WANDA! AND FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN OF THE *LIVING LIGHTNING*, HE'LL SOON BE ABLE TO HANDLE HIMSELF WITH THE *BEST* OF THEM.
WELL, WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE *RED-EYE SPECIAL!*
AND WHERE'S *WONDER MAN* BEEN KEEPING HIMSELF SINCE WE LAID OFF THE *NIGHT SHIFT?*
JUST TAKING CARE OF SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS UP IN *HOLLYWOOD*, AVENGER.
I HOPE SHE WAS *WORTH* IT, SIMON.
IT WASN'T LIKE THAT--EXACTLY.
IF ALL SEVEN REGULARS ARE HERE--PLUS *MOCKINGBIRD*--WE MAY AS WELL START THE *MEETING*.
YOU KNOW, BOBBI, THIS IS MY *FAVORITE* PART OF BEING AN AVENGER--
IT IS?
--WHERE WE ALL GET TO SIT AROUND A POKER TABLE WITH A BIG "A" ON IT, TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT *IRON MAN'S* SAYING THROUGH HIS *VOICE FILTER*.
WHADDA YOU KNOW! *U.S. AGENT* MADE A *FUNNY!*

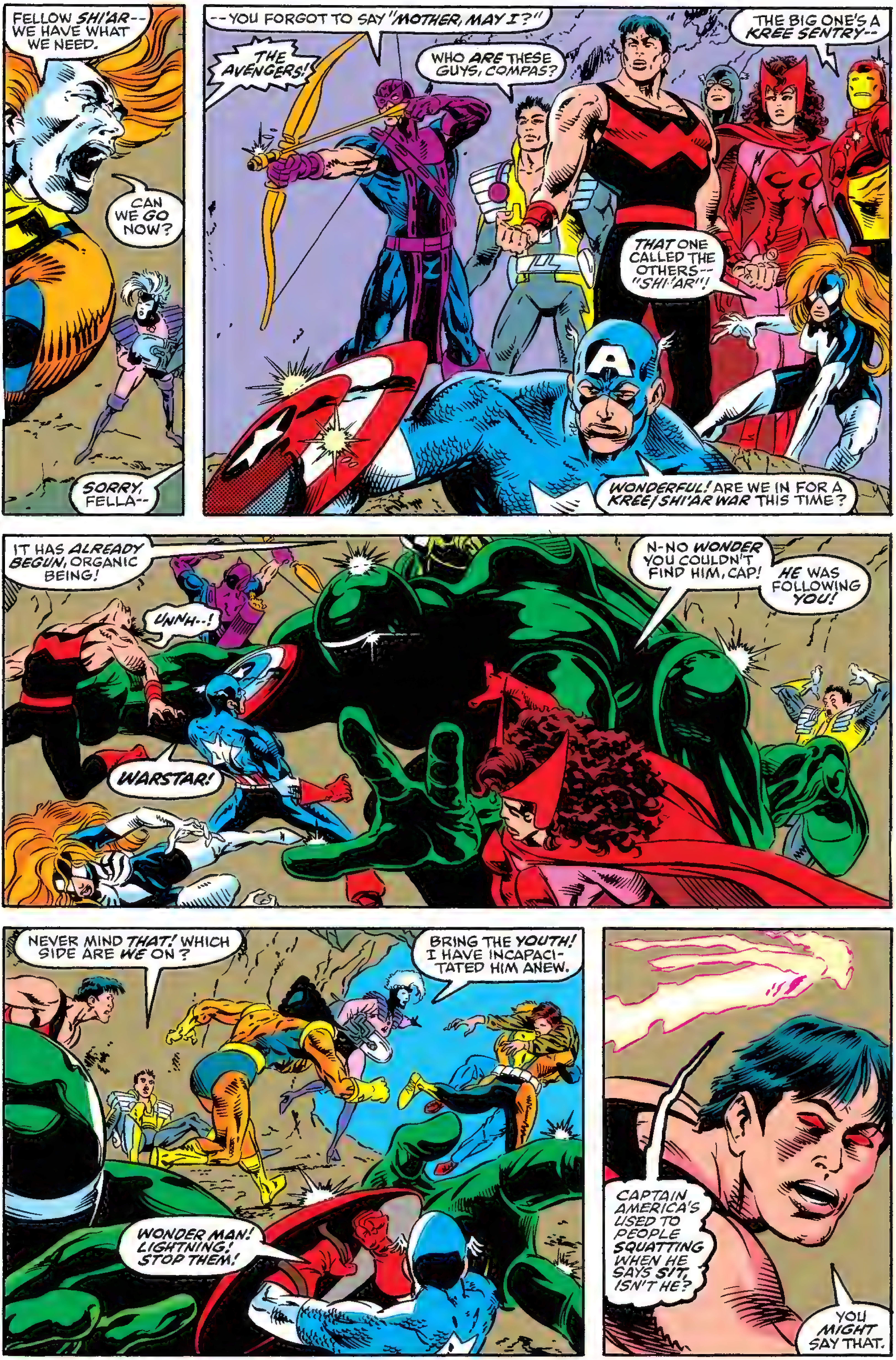

EXCUSE ME, AVENGERS-- CAPTAIN AMERICA IS ON THE PHONE.
I'LL TAKE IT, CARLOS.
UH-OH. THERE'S BEEN BAD BLOOD BETWEEN CAP AND SHELLHEAD EVER SINCE THAT "ARMOR WARS" BUSINESS.
OH-- HELLO, IRON MAN.
WELL, ACTUALLY, NO, I'M NOT USING MY NEW COMMUNI-CARD-- BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE IT.
I TOSSED IT TO RICK JONES, SO HE COULD MAKE A GETAWAY ON MY SKY-CYCLE WHILE I WAS FIGHTING THIS BIG BRUISER NAMED WARSTAR.
I'M AT A PAY PHONE OUTSIDE A DINER IN BENSON, ARIZONA--
--AND FRANKLY, I NEED YOUR HELP, SINCE YOUR GROUP'S SO MUCH CLOSER THAN THE AVENGERS.
WE'RE NOT REALLY IN THE SHUTTLE BUS BUSINESS, CAPTAIN AMERICA...
HEY, C'MON, TIN MAN! I KNOW YOU AND CAP GOT A MAD ON FOR EACH OTHER-- BUT WE'RE ALL AVENGERS!
STILL, SHOULDN'T CAP HAVE SAID "AVENGERS EAST COAST"?
YOU'VE GOT A POINT THERE, SPI.
NATURALLY, IF YOU THINK YOU'RE ONTO SOMETHING BIG, WE'LL BE RIGHT OUT.
JUST GIVE US THE LOCATION.
...AND THE DINER'S JUST PAST THE JUNCTION OF THESE TWO GRAVEL ROADS THAT--
IRON MAN?
ARE YOU THERE?
NOW LOOK, AVENGER, I'VE GOT TO GO TACKLE WARSTAR AGAIN-- THEY'VE PUT THEMSELVES BACK TOGETHER--SO I'VE GOT TO KNOW IF YOU'RE COMING, OR--
THEY'RE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY, CAP-- LEAVING THEIR EVER-FAITHFUL RESERVIST TO HOLD THE FORT.
BUT WHAT DO YOU MEAN THAT THIS "WARSTAR" HAS PUT "THEMSELVES" BACK TOGETHER?
CAP?
VROOOM
HUNG UP.
I DON'T KNOW-- BETWEEN BEING LEFT AS HOUSE-SITTER, AND WATCHING MY ESTRANGED HUSBAND FLIRT WITH SPIDER-WOMAN, MAYBE I SHOULD'VE STAYED IN DETROIT.

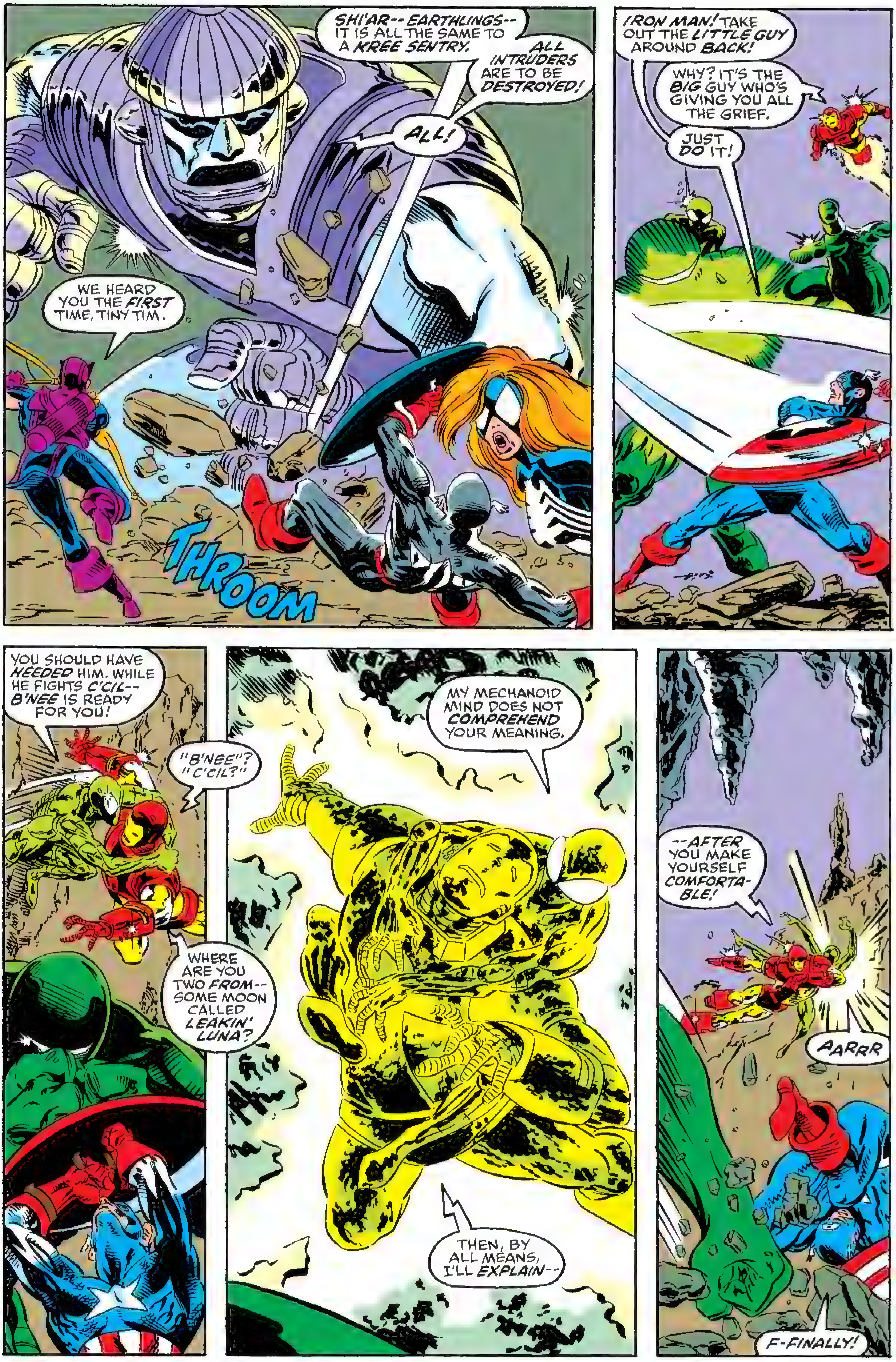

A SHORT TIME LATER, SOMEWHERE OVER *NEW MEXICO*...
...SO *WARSTAR'S* REALLY THIS *LITTLE* GUY, RIDING ON THE BACK OF A *BIG* GUY-- ONLY THEY SEEM TO MAKE UP JUST THE *ONE* ENTITY.
TOO BAD HE-- *THEY*-- FLED BEFORE WE REACHED BENSON.
SO RICK FIGURES THEY'RE *KREE*, HUH?
THEY'RE *SOMETHING* ALIEN, THAT'S FOR SURE.
AND THEY'RE JUST LIABLE TO HAVE *CAPTURED* HIM!
WELL, AT LEAST WE'VE ZEROED IN ON YOUR *COMMUNICARD*.
BUT I FIXED IT SO IT WOULD OPERATE MY *SKY-CYCLE*, FOR HIM.
IF THEY'VE CAUGHT HIM AND *DUMPED* THE CYCLE--
"--RICK JONES COULD BE *ANYWHERE!*"
‹WE'VE *FOUND* IT, COMRADES--›
‹--THE *LOST KREE OUTPOST!*›
‹THIS *UPPER LEVEL* WAS APPARENTLY DESTROYED BY THE EXPLOSION IN WHICH THE RENEGADE KREE COMMANDER *YON-ROGG* PERISHED.›
BUT IT'S NOT THE *UPPER* LEVEL WE *WANT*...
... *IS* IT, TERRAN?
NO... MISTRESS.
WHAT YOU SEEK... IS ON A *LOWER* LEVEL...
...DOWN *THIS* WAY...

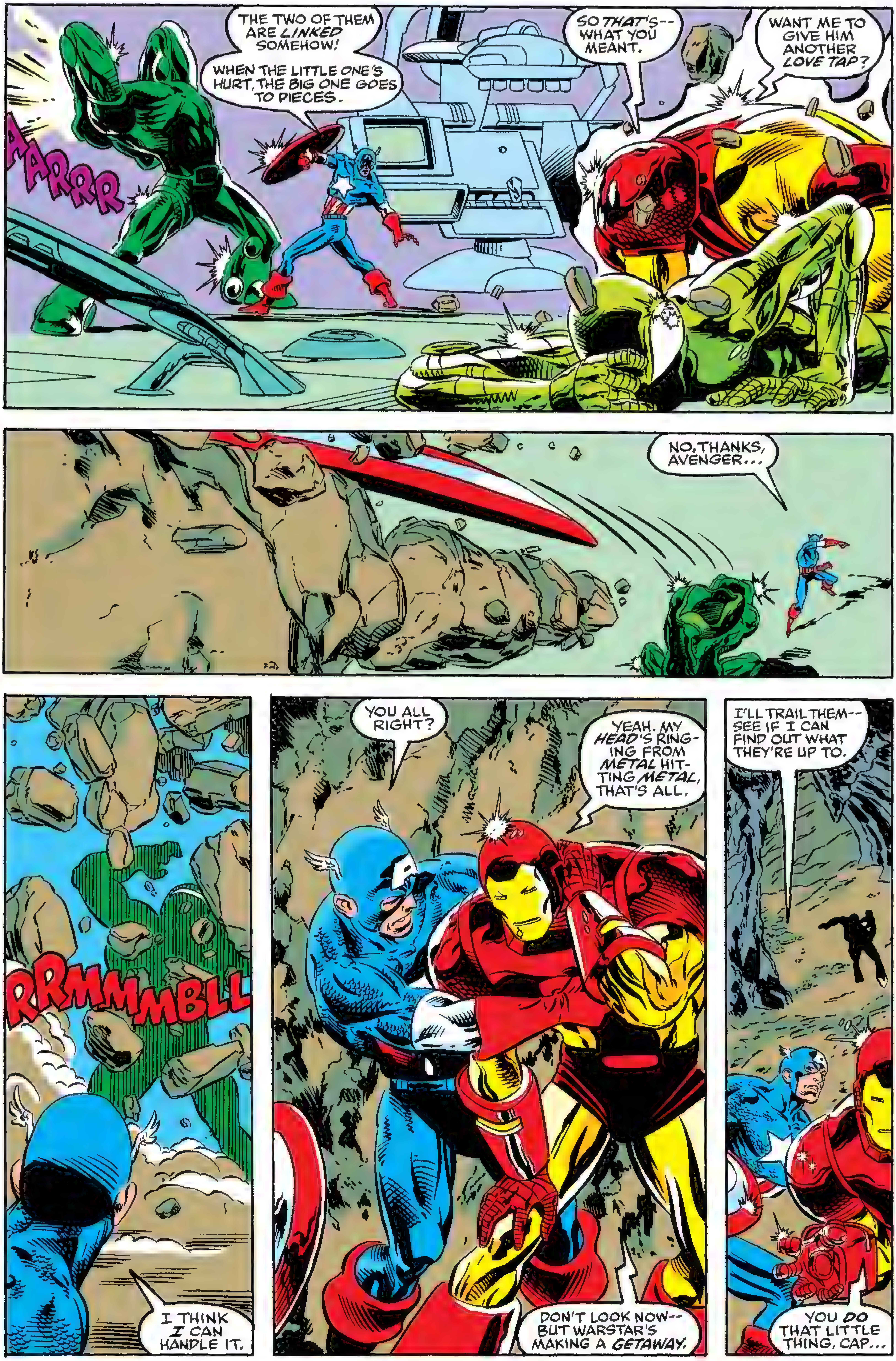

<...HE LED US RIGHT TO IT!
THE LONG-OUTLAWED PSYCHE-MAGNETRON!>
<IT'S VIRTUALLY UNTOUCHED!
IN FACT, THERE'S VERY LITTLE DESTRUCTION ON THIS LEVEL!>
< MAR-VELL CLEARLY JUDGED BY THE DAMAGE DONE NEARER THE SURFACE, AND THUS MISTAKENLY THOUGHT THE ENTIRE OUTPOST HAD BEEN OBLITERATED!>
<QUICKLY, NOW-- YOU KNOW WHAT WE IMPERIAL GUARDSMEN CAME AFTER!>
< AYE, ORACLE>
<BUT WHY THE BIG HURRY?!>
<THAT MATTER-RESHAPING DEVICE IS HARDLY GOING ANYWHERE-->
<--NOR IS THIS SINGLE PART OF IT WHICH WE NEED>
<STILL, TEMPEST, THERE IS NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY-->
<WHAT'S THAT?>
<LOOK! SOMETHING IS RISING FROM BELOW!
THERE MUST BE A THIRD LEVEL, OF WHICH OUR SPIES-- AND THE TERRAN-- KNEW NOTHING!>
<THEN--THAT HUGE FORM CAN ONLY BE-- A KREE SENTRY!>
STAY HERE, TERRAN!
NOT SIMPLY A SENTRY, MAN OF THE SHI'AR--

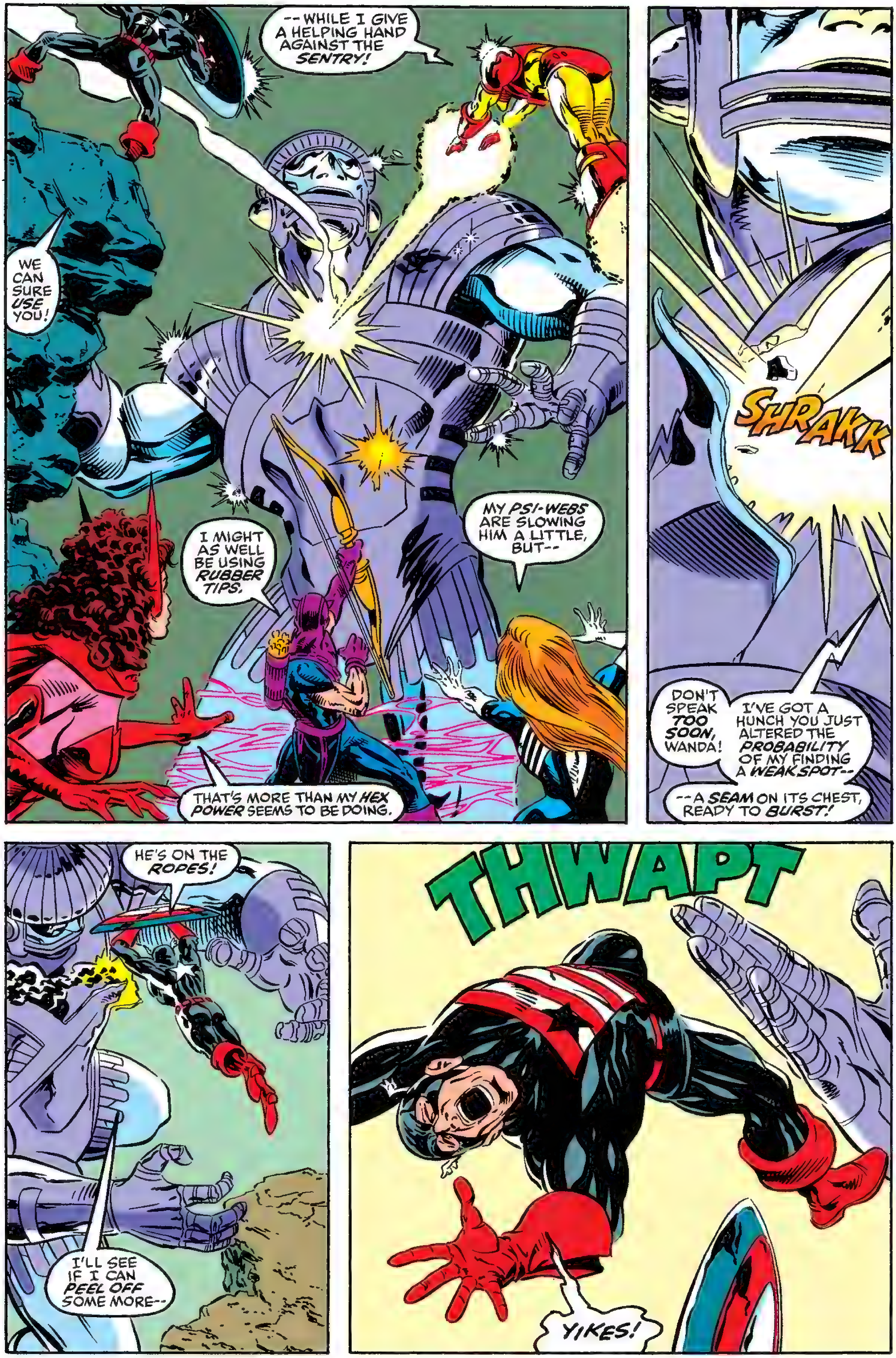

I AM *INTERGALACTIC SENTRY #372* -- RE-ACTIVATED FOR THE *FIRST TIME* SINCE MY POSTING ON THIS PRIMITIVE PLANET SOME 250 CENTURIES AGO.
THAT *LOW NUMBER* MEANS IT WAS ONE OF THE *FIRST* SENTRIES PRODUCED.
MY *MENTAL BOLTS* HAVE NO EFFECT ON ITS *SYNTHETIC BRAIN.*
ELECTRON-- TEMPEST-- USE YOUR *ELECTRICAL* POWERS AGAINST IT!
BUT--WHY DID IT COME TO LIFE *NOW*-- INSTEAD OF DURING SOME *EARLIER* INTRUSION?
IT WOULD SEEM THE SHI'AR HAVE *ADVANCED* SOMEWHAT SINCE MY CREATION -- YET STILL HAVE NOT MOVED BEYOND THE ENERVATING PULL OF BASE *CURIOSITY.*
I WAS PROGRAMMED TO *SELF-ACTIVATE* WHEN THIS CHAMBER WAS ENTERED -- *AND* THERE WAS *NO KREE OFFICER PRESENT.*
IN THE THREE MOST RECENT INTRUSIONS, ONLY THE *FIRST* OF THOSE TWO CONDITIONS WAS MET.
ON *THIS* OCCASION, *BOTH* WERE--
--AND SO I MUST *DESTROY ALL INTERLOPERS!*
ORACLE-- *TAKE* THIS, SO IT DOES NOT RISK BEING DAMAGED!
YES...]

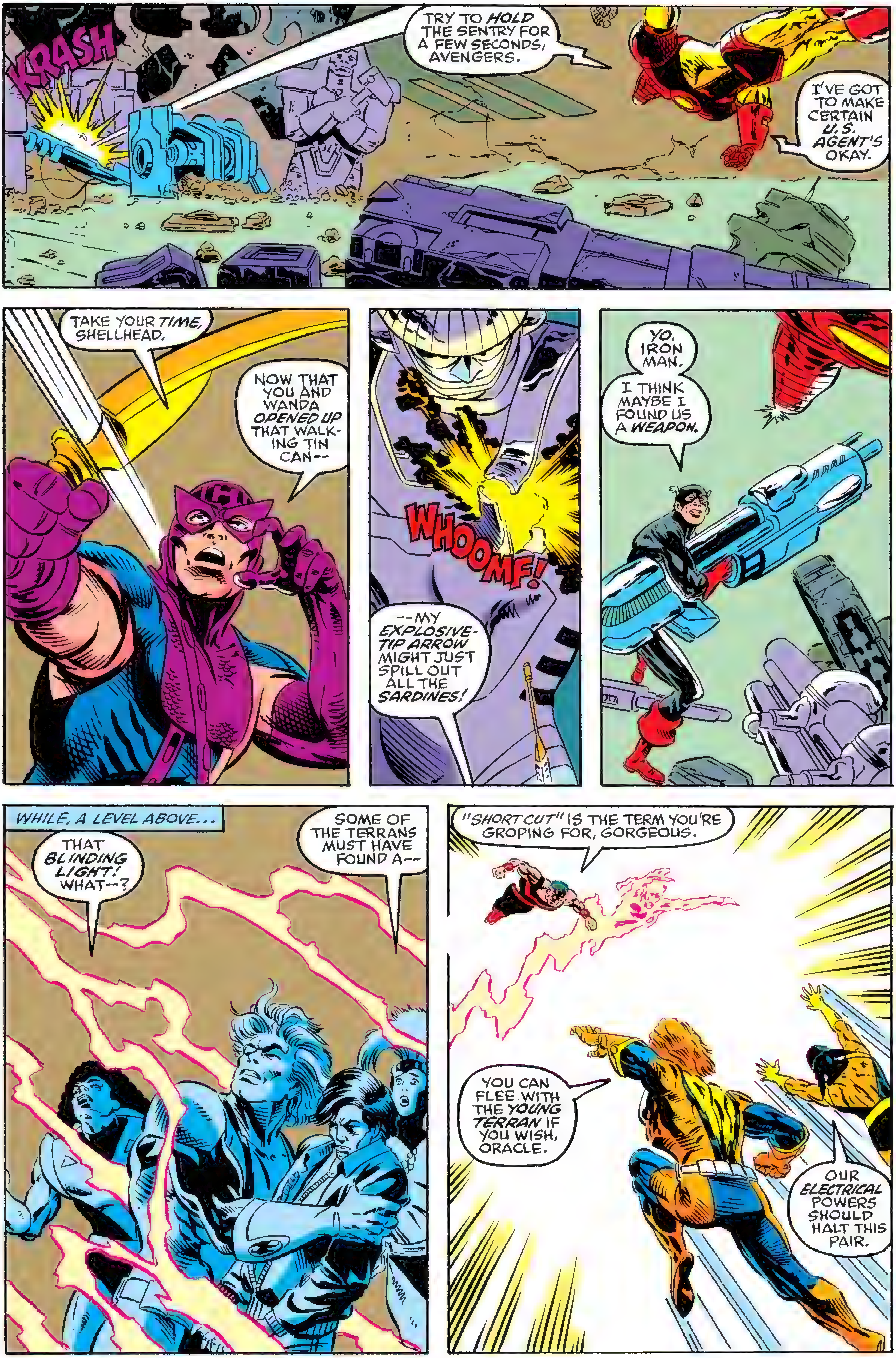

KEEP *ON THE MOVE*-- SO HE CAN'T *ZERO IN* ON US!
WE CAN ONLY HOPE WE'RE DOING HIM *SOME* HARM WITH OUR *ELECTRO-BOLTS.*
YOU MEAN, WITH OUR *TEMPEST-BOLTS.*
HE IS MISSING *US*, SURELY ENOUGH--
--BUT *LOOK!* HIS BLASTS ARE SWEEPING TOWARD THE YOUNG *TERRAN*-- WHO, BEING MESMERIZED, DOES NOT EVEN SEEK TO AVOID THEM!
SMALL LOSS! WE HAVE ALREADY LEARNED FROM HIM ALL WE *NEEDED* TO KNOW--
--SO HE IS ULTIMATELY *EXPENDABLE!*
NOT TO ME!
WAKE UP, RICK! *WAKE UP!*
UNNNHH--!
H-HUH? OH--*HI*, CAP! WH-WHERE AM I?
LOOK, IT'S NOT MY *FAULT* ABOUT YOUR *CYCLE*--HONEST!
AT LEAST I SAVED YOUR SPECIAL *CARD*--
GOT IT RIGHT HERE IN MY *POCKET...*

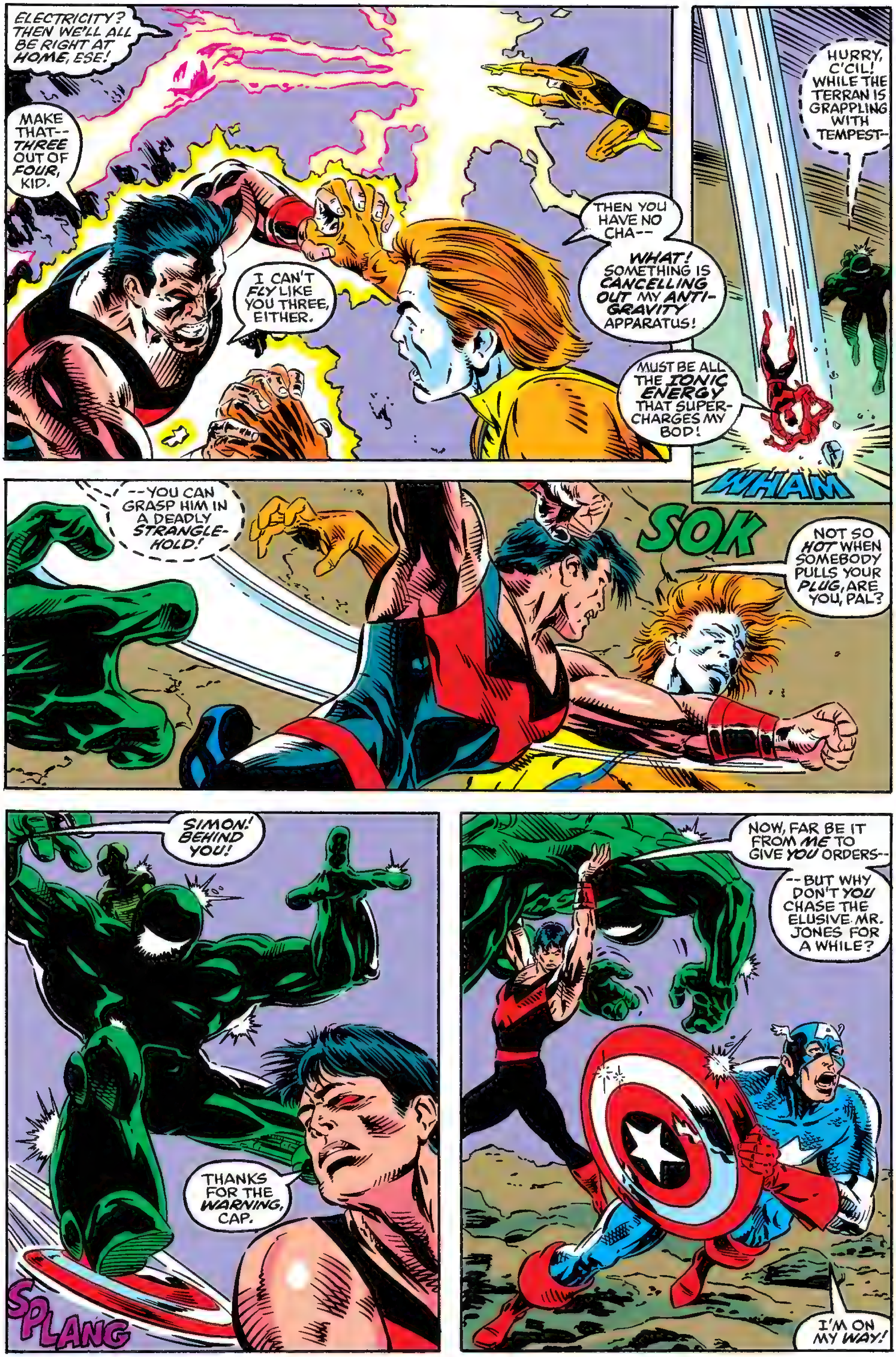

FELLOW SHI'AR-- WE HAVE WHAT WE NEED.
CAN WE GO NOW?
SORRY, FELLA--
--YOU FORGOT TO SAY "MOTHER, MAY I?"
THE AVENGERS!
WHO ARE THESE GUYS, COMPAS?
THE BIG ONE'S A KREE SENTRY--
THAT ONE CALLED THE OTHERS-- "SHI'AR"!
WONDERFUL! ARE WE IN FOR A KREE/SHI'AR WAR THIS TIME?
IT HAS ALREADY BEGUN, ORGANIC BEING!
UNNH--!
WARSTAR!
N-NO WONDER YOU COULDN'T FIND HIM, CAP!
HE WAS FOLLOWING YOU!
NEVER MIND THAT! WHICH SIDE ARE WE ON?
BRING THE YOUTH! I HAVE INCAPACITATED HIM ANEW.
WONDER MAN! LIGHTNING! STOP THEM!
CAPTAIN AMERICA'S USED TO PEOPLE SQUATTING WHEN HE SAYS SIT, ISN'T HE?
YOU MIGHT SAY THAT.

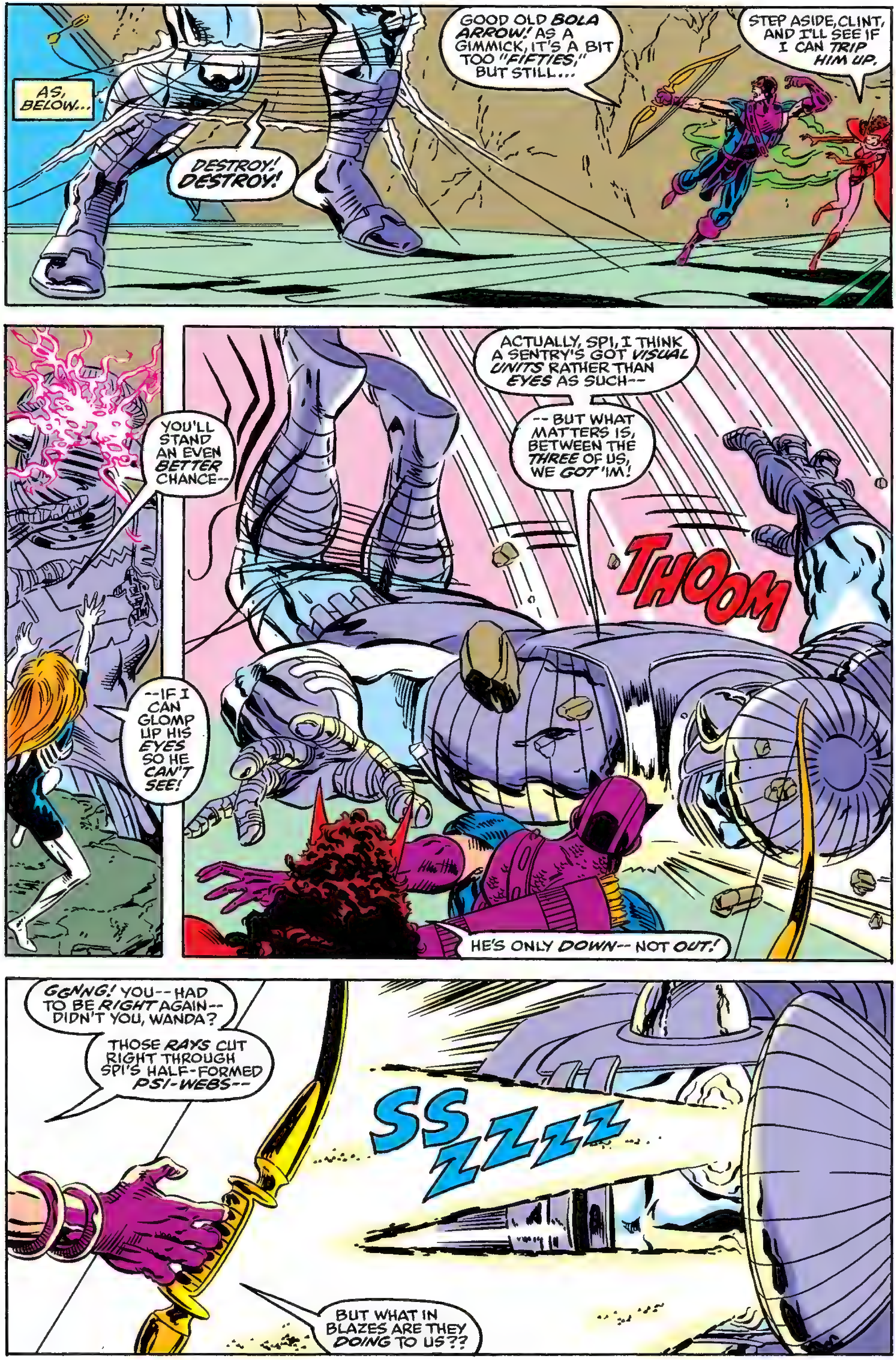

SHI'AR-- EARTHLINGS-- IT IS ALL THE SAME TO A KREE SENTRY.
ALL INTRUDERS ARE TO BE DESTROYED!
ALL!
WE HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME, TINY TIM.
THROOM
IRON MAN! TAKE OUT THE LITTLE GUY AROUND BACK!
WHY? IT'S THE BIG GUY WHO'S GIVING YOU ALL THE GRIEF.
JUST DO IT!
YOU SHOULD HAVE HEEDED HIM. WHILE HE FIGHTS C'CIL-- B'NEE IS READY FOR YOU!
"B'NEE"? "C'CIL?"
WHERE ARE YOU TWO FROM-- SOME MOON CALLED LEAKIN' LUNA?
MY MECHANOID MIND DOES NOT COMPREHEND YOUR MEANING.
THEN, BY ALL MEANS, I'LL EXPLAIN--
--AFTER YOU MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE!
AARRR
F-FINALLY!

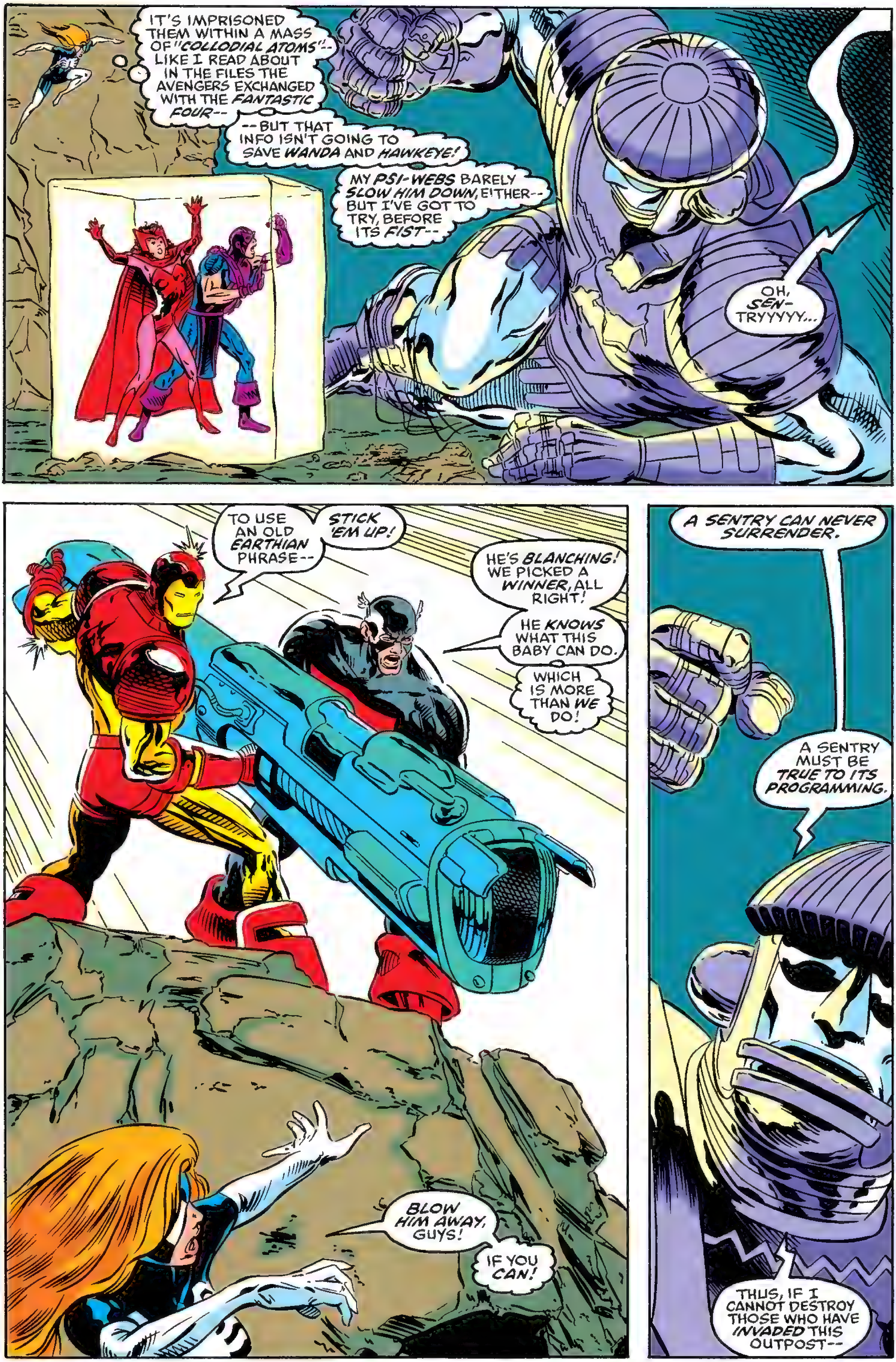

THE TWO OF THEM ARE *LINKED* SOMEHOW!
WHEN THE LITTLE ONE'S HURT, THE BIG ONE GOES TO PIECES.
AARRR
SO *THAT'S*-- WHAT YOU MEANT.
WANT ME TO GIVE HIM ANOTHER *LOVE TAP?*
NO, THANKS, AVENGER...
RRMMMBLL
I THINK *I* CAN HANDLE IT.
YOU ALL RIGHT?
YEAH. MY *HEAD'S* RINGING FROM *METAL* HITTING *METAL*, THAT'S ALL.
DON'T LOOK NOW-- BUT WARSTAR'S MAKING A *GETAWAY*.
I'LL TRAIL THEM-- SEE IF I CAN FIND OUT WHAT THEY'RE UP TO.
YOU *DO* THAT LITTLE THING, CAP...

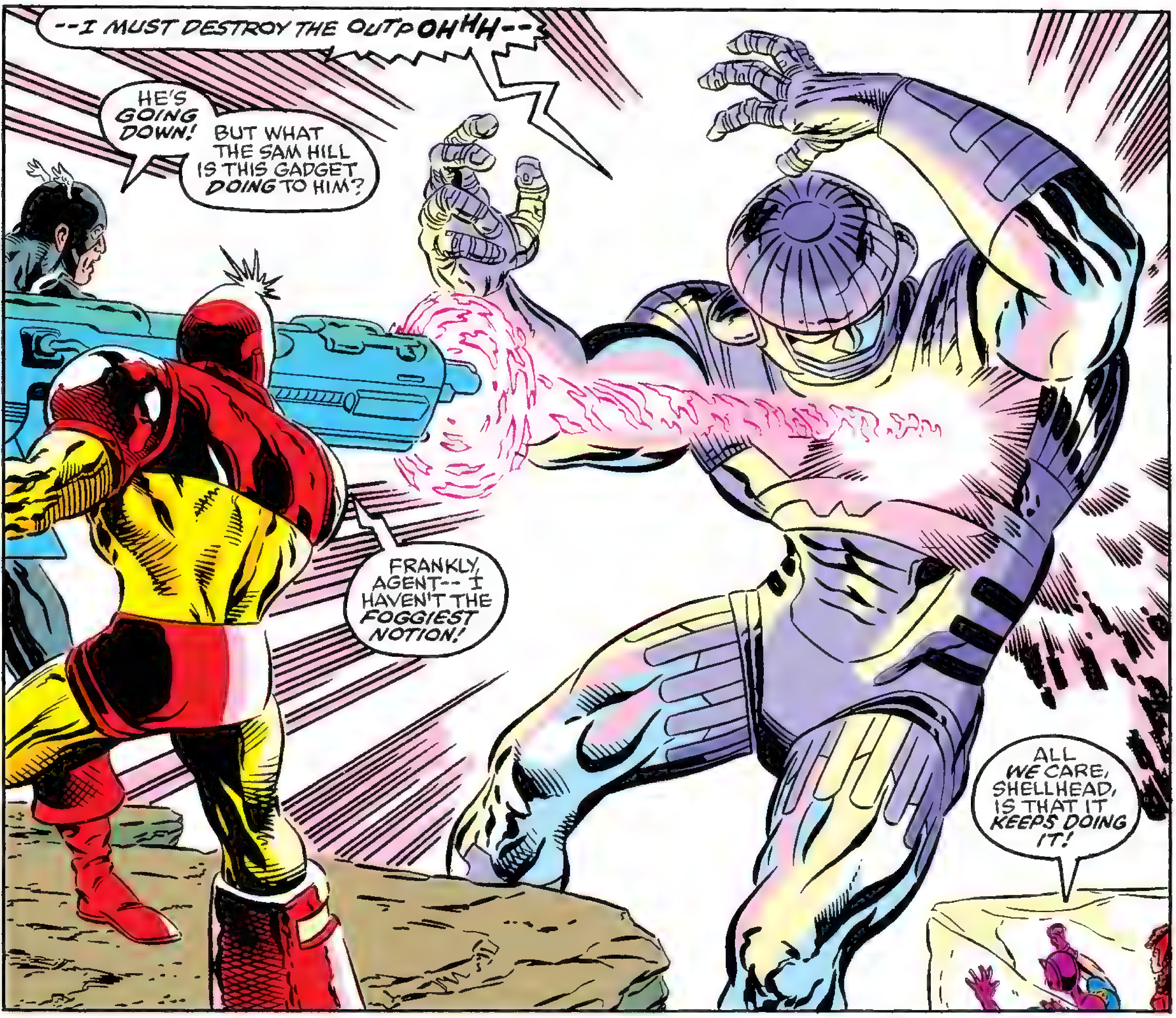

--WHILE I GIVE A HELPING HAND AGAINST THE SENTRY!
WE CAN SURE USE YOU!
I MIGHT AS WELL BE USING RUBBER TIPS.
MY PSI-WEBS ARE SLOWING HIM A LITTLE, BUT--
THAT'S MORE THAN MY HEX POWER SEEMS TO BE DOING.
SHRAKK
DON'T SPEAK TOO SOON, WANDA!
I'VE GOT A HUNCH YOU JUST ALTERED THE PROBABILITY OF MY FINDING A WEAK SPOT--
--A SEAM ON ITS CHEST, READY TO BURST!
HE'S ON THE ROPES!
I'LL SEE IF I CAN PEEL OFF SOME MORE--
THWAPT
YIKES!

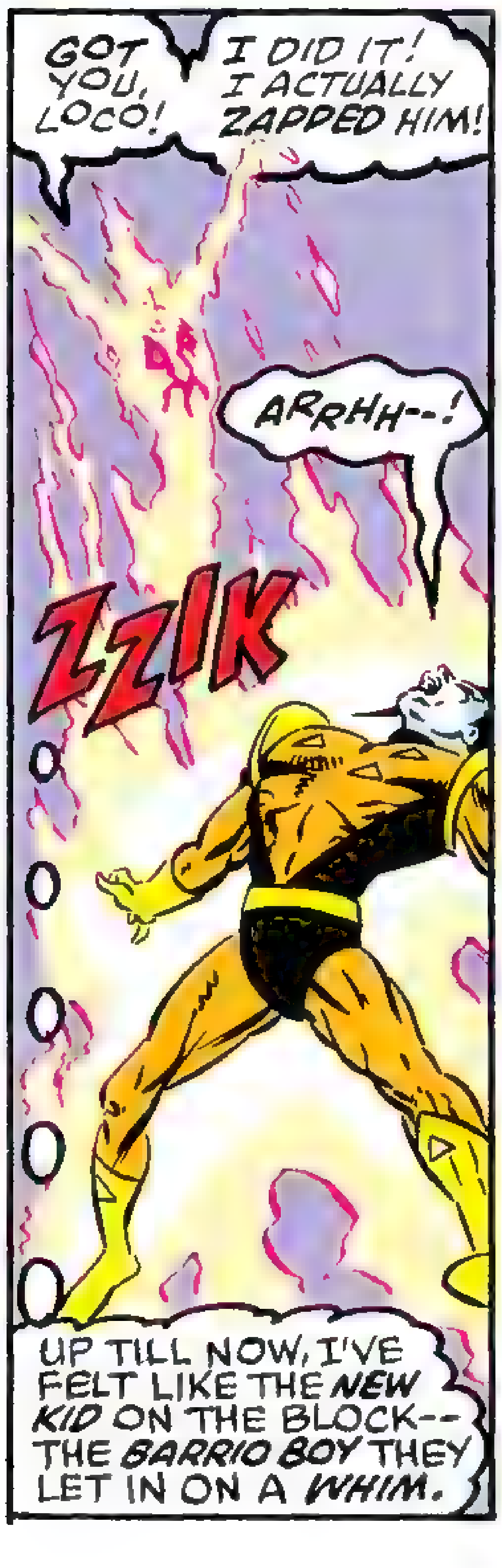

KRASH
TRY TO HOLD THE SENTRY FOR A FEW SECONDS, AVENGERS.
I'VE GOT TO MAKE CERTAIN U.S. AGENT'S OKAY.
TAKE YOUR TIME, SHELLHEAD.
NOW THAT YOU AND WANDA OPENED UP THAT WALKING TIN CAN--
WHOOMF!
--MY EXPLOSIVE-TIP ARROW MIGHT JUST SPILL OUT ALL THE SARDINES!
YO, IRON MAN.
I THINK MAYBE I FOUND US A WEAPON.
WHILE, A LEVEL ABOVE...
THAT BLINDING LIGHT! WHAT--?
SOME OF THE TERRANS MUST HAVE FOUND A--
"SHORT CUT" IS THE TERM YOU'RE GROPING FOR, GORGEOUS.
YOU CAN FLEE WITH THE YOUNG TERRAN IF YOU WISH, ORACLE.
OUR ELECTRICAL POWERS SHOULD HALT THIS PAIR.

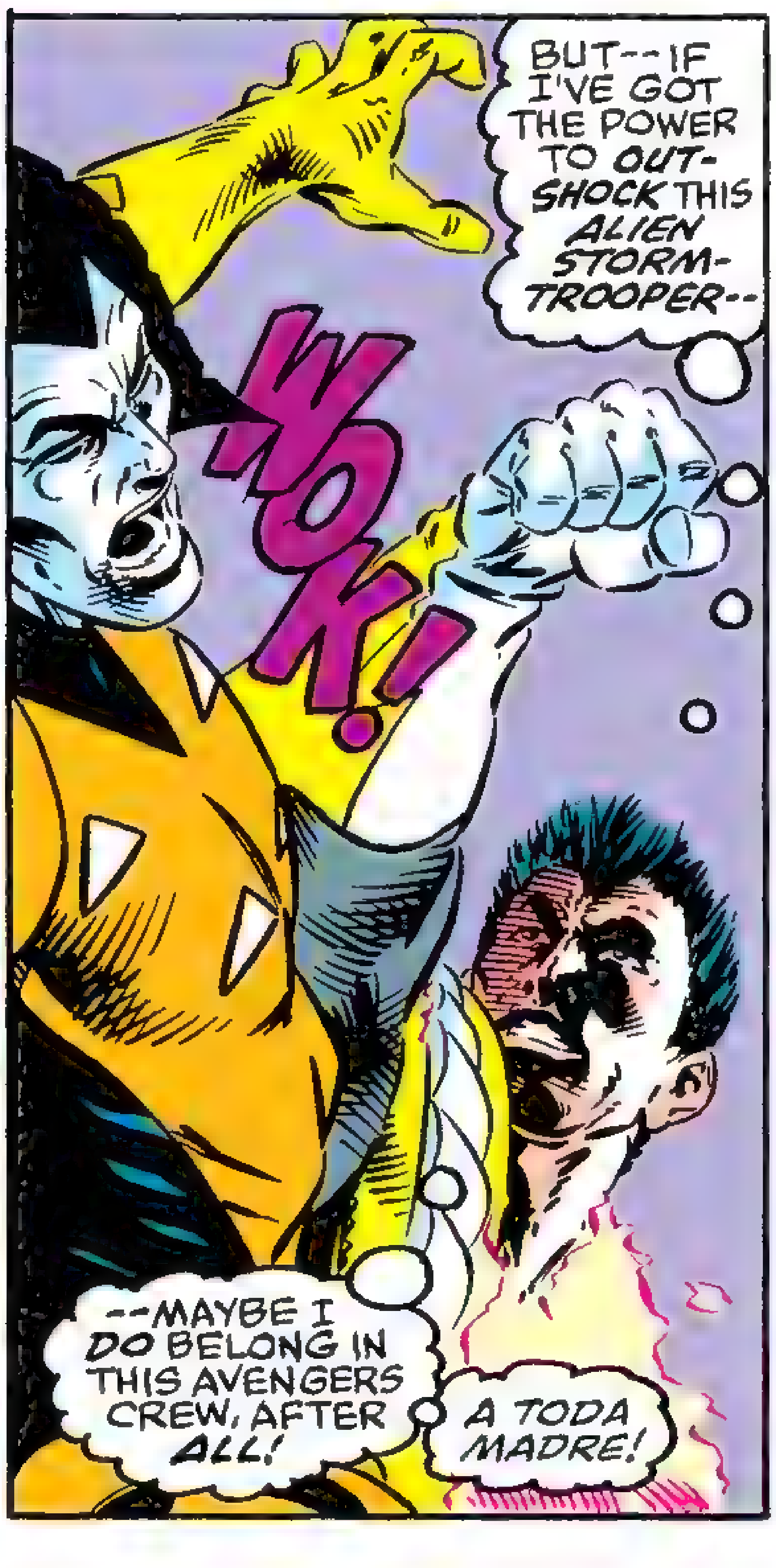

ELECTRICITY? THEN WE'LL ALL BE RIGHT AT *HOME*, ESE!
MAKE THAT-- *THREE* OUT OF *FOUR*, KID.
I CAN'T *FLY* LIKE YOU THREE, EITHER.
THEN YOU HAVE NO CHA--
WHAT! SOMETHING IS *CANCELLING OUT* MY *ANTI-GRAVITY* APPARATUS!
MUST BE ALL THE *IONIC ENERGY* THAT SUPER-CHARGES MY BOD!
HURRY, C'CIL! WHILE THE TERRAN IS GRAPPLING WITH TEMPEST--
WHAM
--YOU CAN GRASP HIM IN A DEADLY *STRANGLE-HOLD!*
SOK
NOT SO *HOT* WHEN SOMEBODY PULLS YOUR *PLUG*, ARE YOU, PAL?
SIMON! BEHIND YOU!
THANKS FOR THE *WARNING*, CAP.
SPLANG
NOW, FAR BE IT FROM *ME* TO GIVE *YOU* ORDERS--
--BUT WHY DON'T *YOU* CHASE THE ELUSIVE MR. JONES FOR A WHILE?
I'M ON MY *WAY!*

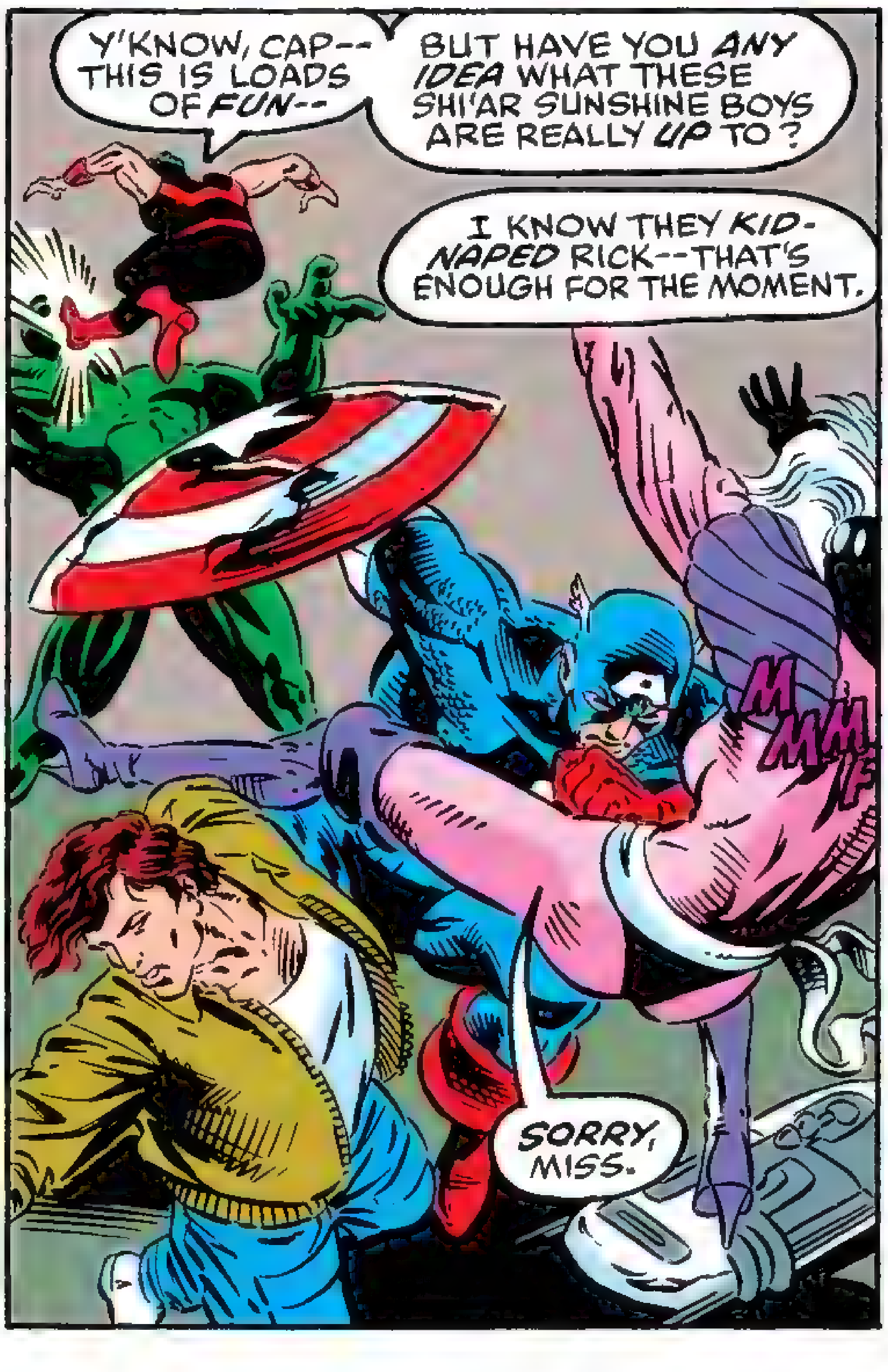

AS, BELOW...
DESTROY! DESTROY!
GOOD OLD BOLA ARROW! AS A GIMMICK, IT'S A BIT TOO "FIFTIES," BUT STILL...
STEP ASIDE, CLINT, AND I'LL SEE IF I CAN TRIP HIM UP.
YOU'LL STAND AN EVEN BETTER CHANCE--
--IF I CAN GLOMP UP HIS EYES SO HE CAN'T SEE!
ACTUALLY, SPI, I THINK A SENTRY'S GOT VISUAL UNITS RATHER THAN EYES AS SUCH--
-- BUT WHAT MATTERS IS, BETWEEN THE THREE OF US, WE GOT 'IM!
THOOM
HE'S ONLY DOWN-- NOT OUT!
GGNNG! YOU--HAD TO BE RIGHT AGAIN-- DIDN'T YOU, WANDA?
THOSE RAYS CUT RIGHT THROUGH SPI'S HALF-FORMED PSI-WEBS--
SSZZZZ
BUT WHAT IN BLAZES ARE THEY DOING TO US??

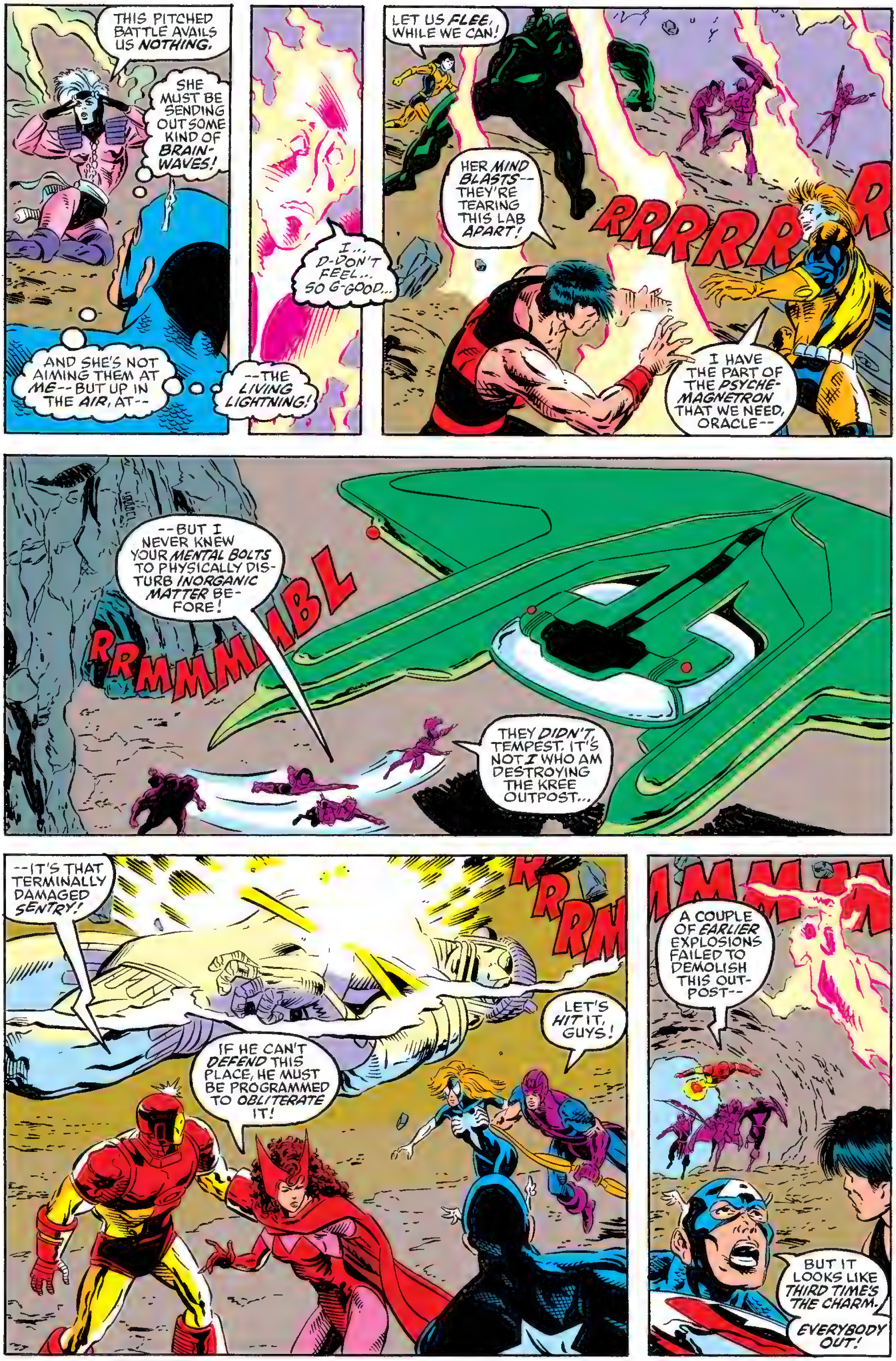

IT'S IMPRISONED THEM WITHIN A MASS OF "*COLLODIAL ATOMS*"-- LIKE I READ ABOUT IN THE FILES THE AVENGERS EXCHANGED WITH THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*--
--BUT THAT INFO ISN'T GOING TO SAVE *WANDA* AND *HAWKEYE!*
MY *PSI-WEBS* BARELY *SLOW HIM DOWN*, EITHER-- BUT I'VE GOT TO TRY, BEFORE ITS *FIST*--
OH, *SEN*-TRYYYYY...
TO USE AN OLD *EARTHIAN* PHRASE--
STICK 'EM UP!
HE'S *BLANCHING!* WE PICKED A *WINNER*, ALL RIGHT!
HE *KNOWS* WHAT THIS BABY CAN DO.
WHICH IS MORE THAN *WE* DO!
BLOW HIM AWAY, GUYS!
IF YOU *CAN!*
A SENTRY CAN NEVER SURRENDER.
A SENTRY MUST BE *TRUE TO ITS PROGRAMMING.*
THUS, IF I CANNOT DESTROY THOSE WHO HAVE *INVADED* THIS OUTPOST--

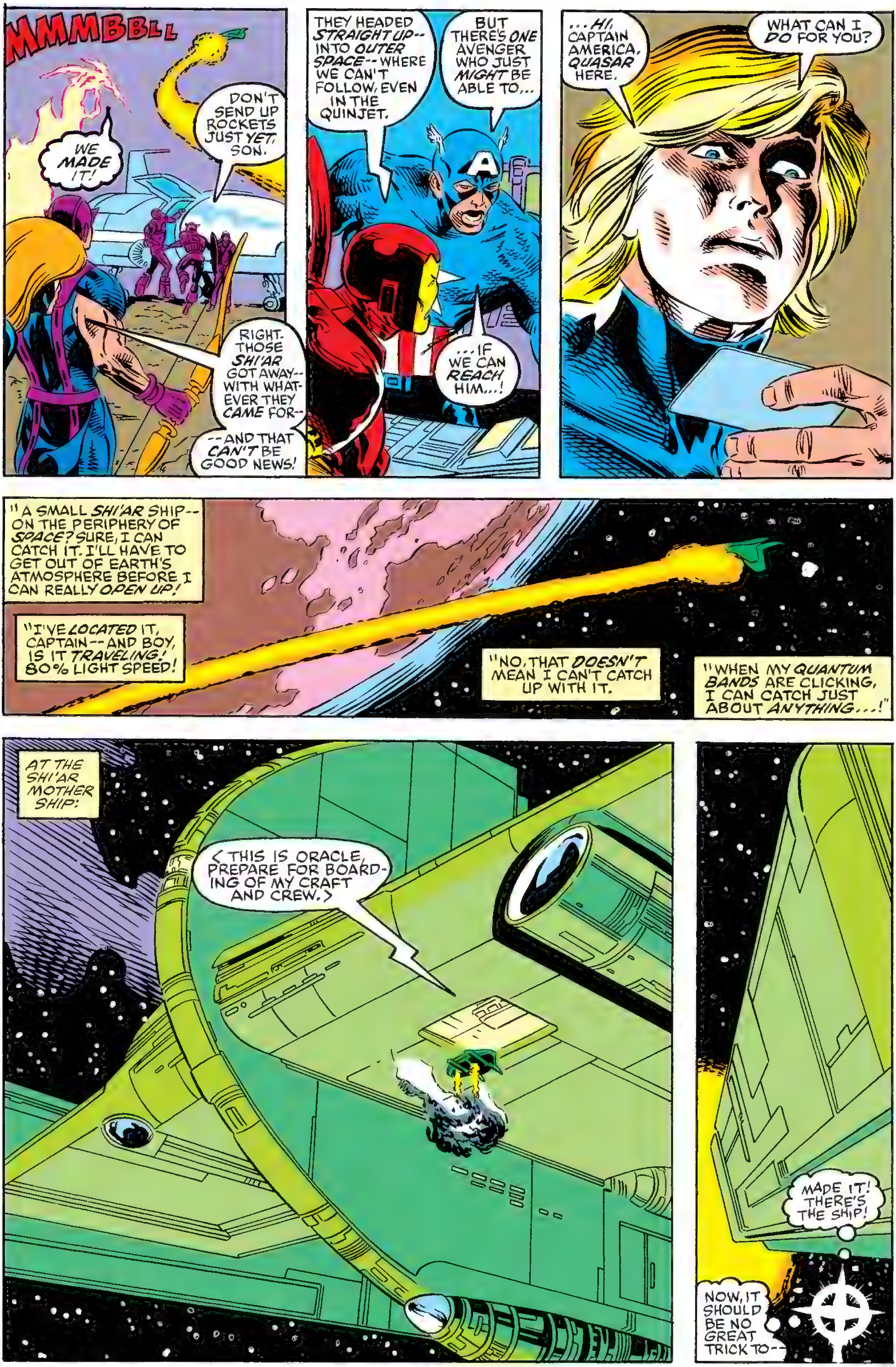

--I MUST DESTROY THE OUTPOHHH--
HE'S GOING DOWN!
BUT WHAT THE SAM HILL IS THIS GADGET DOING TO HIM?
FRANKLY, AGENT-- I HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST NOTION!
ALL WE CARE, SHELLHEAD, IS THAT IT KEEPS DOING IT!

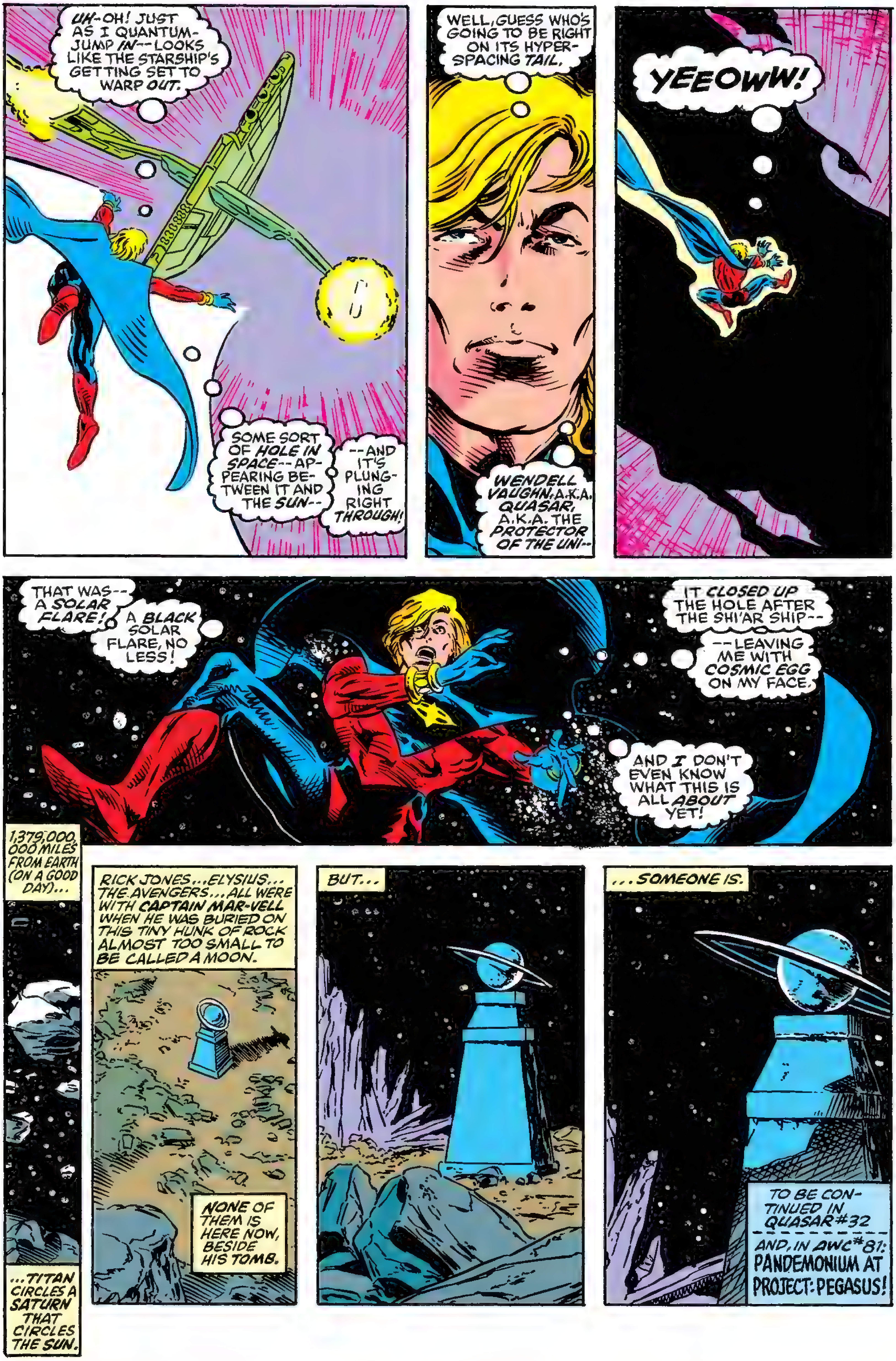

GOT YOU, LOCO!
I DID IT! I ACTUALLY ZAPPED HIM!
ARRHH--!
ZZIK
UP TILL NOW, I'VE FELT LIKE THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK-- THE BARRIO BOY THEY LET IN ON A WHIM.


BUT--IF I'VE GOT THE POWER TO OUT-SHOCK THIS ALIEN STORM-TROOPER--
WOK!
--MAYBE I DO BELONG IN THIS AVENGERS CREW, AFTER ALL!
A TODA MADRE!


Y'KNOW, CAP-- THIS IS LOADS OF FUN--
BUT HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHAT THESE SHI'AR SUNSHINE BOYS ARE REALLY UP TO?
I KNOW THEY KID-NAPED RICK--THAT'S ENOUGH FOR THE MOMENT.
MMMF
SORRY, MISS.


THIS PITCHED BATTLE AVAILS US *NOTHING.*
SHE MUST BE SENDING OUT SOME KIND OF *BRAIN-WAVES!*
AND SHE'S NOT AIMING THEM AT *ME*--BUT UP IN THE *AIR,* AT--
I... D-DON'T FEEL... SO G-GOOD...
--THE *LIVING LIGHTNING!*
LET US *FLEE,* WHILE WE CAN!
HER *MIND BLASTS*--THEY'RE TEARING THIS LAB *APART!*
RRRRRRR
I HAVE THE PART OF THE *PSYCHE-MAGNETRON* THAT WE NEED, ORACLE--
--BUT I NEVER KNEW YOUR *MENTAL BOLTS* TO PHYSICALLY DISTURB *INORGANIC MATTER* BEFORE!
RRMMMMBL
THEY *DIDN'T,* TEMPEST. IT'S NOT *I* WHO AM DESTROYING THE KREE OUTPOST...
--IT'S THAT TERMINALLY DAMAGED *SENTRY!*
RRRM
IF HE CAN'T *DEFEND* THIS PLACE, HE MUST BE PROGRAMMED TO *OBLITERATE* IT!
LET'S *HIT* IT, GUYS!
MMMM
A COUPLE OF *EARLIER* EXPLOSIONS FAILED TO DEMOLISH THIS OUTPOST--
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE *THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM.*
EVERYBODY OUT!


MMMBBLL
WE MADE IT!
DON'T SEND UP ROCKETS JUST YET, SON.
RIGHT. THOSE SHI'AR GOT AWAY-- WITH WHATEVER THEY CAME FOR--
--AND THAT CAN'T BE GOOD NEWS!
THEY HEADED STRAIGHT UP-- INTO OUTER SPACE-- WHERE WE CAN'T FOLLOW, EVEN IN THE QUINJET.
BUT THERE'S ONE AVENGER WHO JUST MIGHT BE ABLE TO...
...IF WE CAN REACH HIM...!
...HI, CAPTAIN AMERICA. QUASAR HERE.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
"A SMALL SHI'AR SHIP-- ON THE PERIPHERY OF SPACE? SURE, I CAN CATCH IT. I'LL HAVE TO GET OUT OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE BEFORE I CAN REALLY OPEN UP!
"I'VE LOCATED IT, CAPTAIN-- AND BOY, IS IT TRAVELING! 80% LIGHT SPEED!
"NO, THAT DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T CATCH UP WITH IT.
"WHEN MY QUANTUM BANDS ARE CLICKING, I CAN CATCH JUST ABOUT ANYTHING...!"
AT THE SHI'AR MOTHER SHIP:
<THIS IS ORACLE. PREPARE FOR BOARDING OF MY CRAFT AND CREW.>
MADE IT! THERE'S THE SHIP!
NOW, IT SHOULD BE NO GREAT TRICK TO--


UH-OH! JUST AS I QUANTUM-JUMP IN--LOOKS LIKE THE STARSHIP'S GETTING SET TO WARP OUT.
SOME SORT OF HOLE IN SPACE--APPEARING BETWEEN IT AND THE SUN--
--AND IT'S PLUNGING RIGHT THROUGH!
WELL, GUESS WHO'S GOING TO BE RIGHT ON ITS HYPER-SPACING TAIL.
WENDELL VAUGHN, A.K.A. QUASAR, A.K.A. THE PROTECTOR OF THE UNI--
YEEOWW!
THAT WAS--A SOLAR FLARE!
A BLACK SOLAR FLARE, NO LESS!
IT CLOSED UP THE HOLE AFTER THE SHI'AR SHIP--
--LEAVING ME WITH COSMIC EGG ON MY FACE.
AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT YET!
1,379,000,000 MILES FROM EARTH (ON A GOOD DAY)...
...TITAN CIRCLES A SATURN THAT CIRCLES THE SUN.
RICK JONES...ELYSIUS...THE AVENGERS...ALL WERE WITH CAPTAIN MAR-VELL WHEN HE WAS BURIED ON THIS TINY HUNK OF ROCK ALMOST TOO SMALL TO BE CALLED A MOON.
NONE OF THEM IS HERE NOW, BESIDE HIS TOMB.
BUT...
...SOMEONE IS.
TO BE CONTINUED IN QUASAR #32
AND, IN AWC #81: PANDEMONIUM AT PROJECT: PEGASUS!

MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 3
QUASAR
TM
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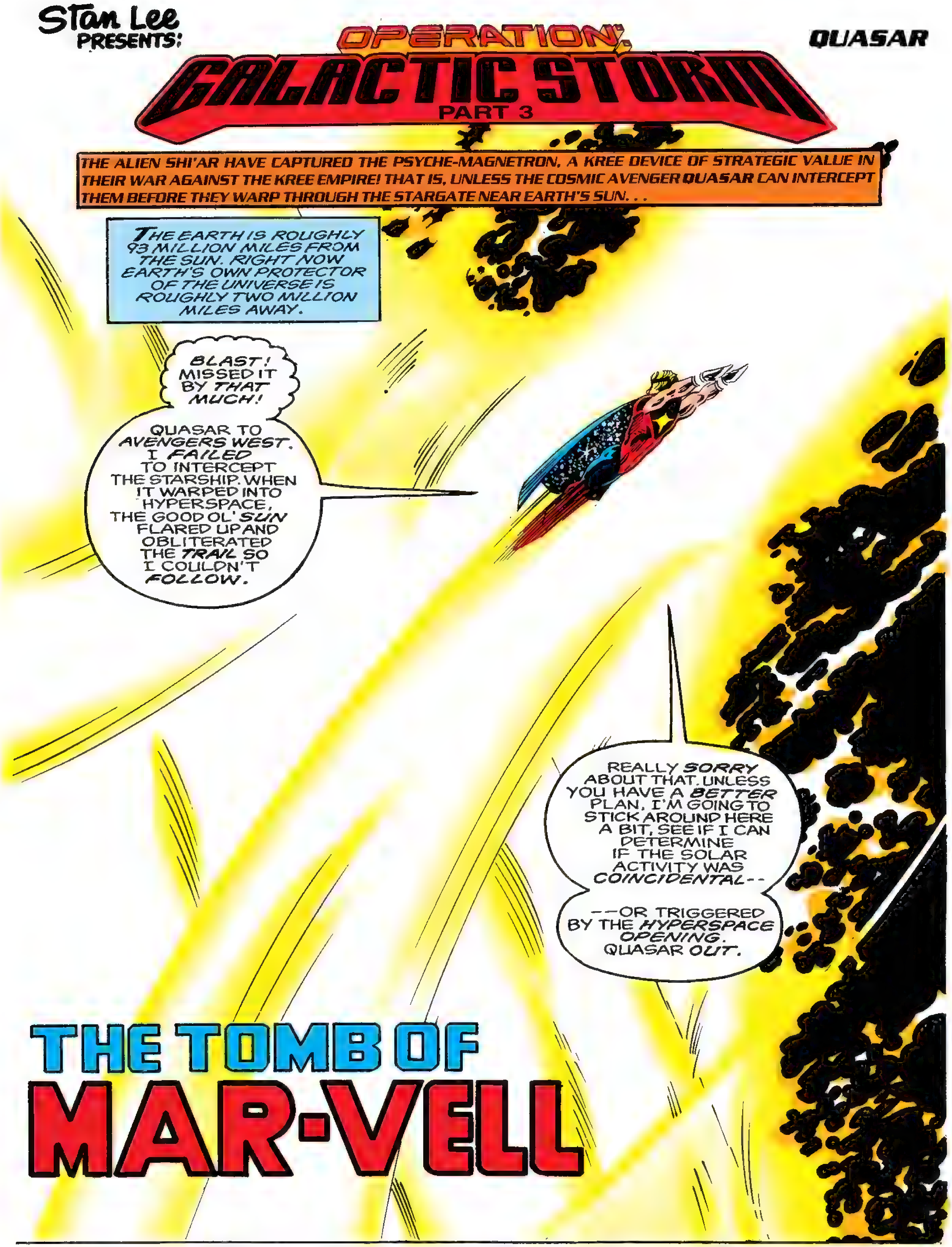
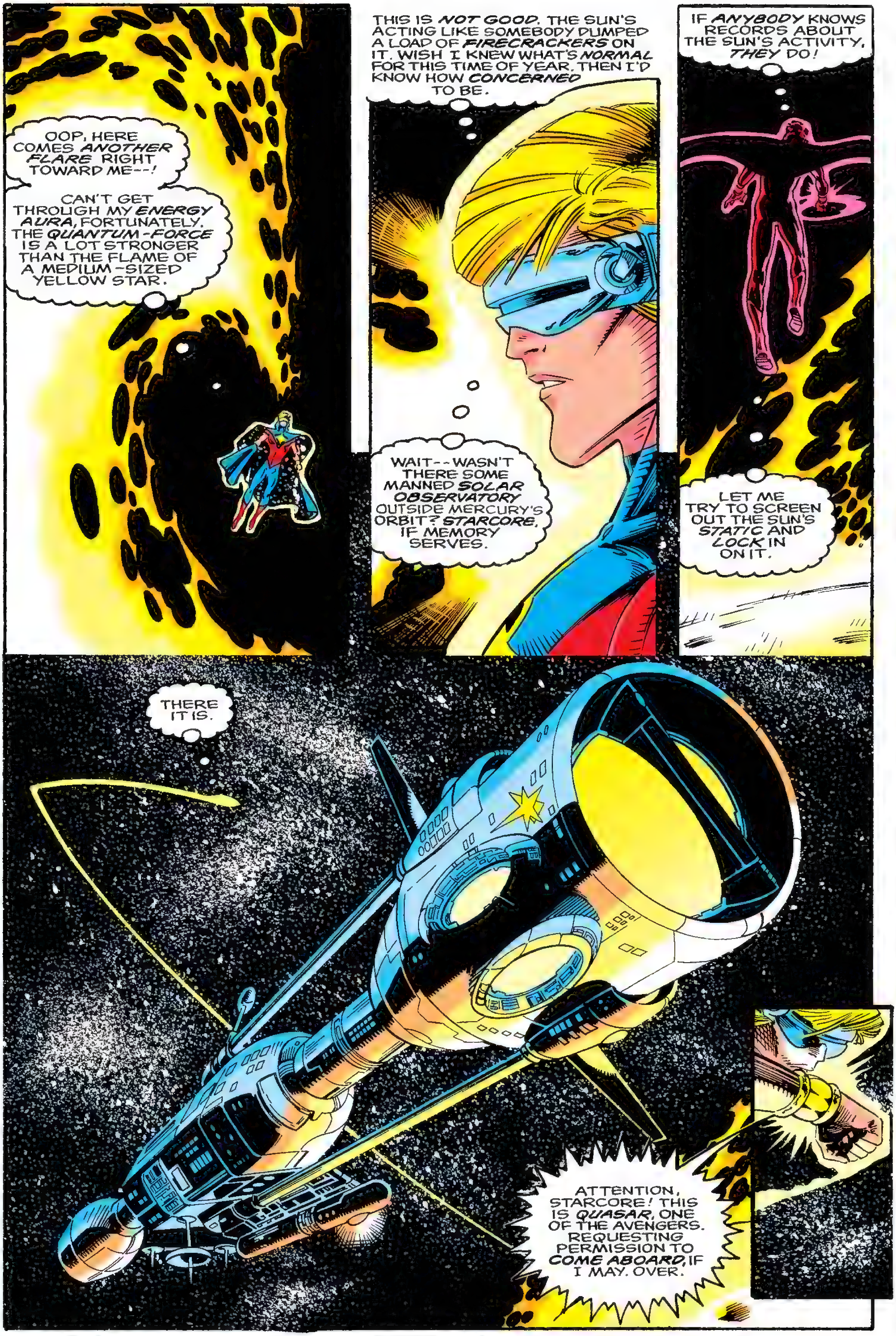
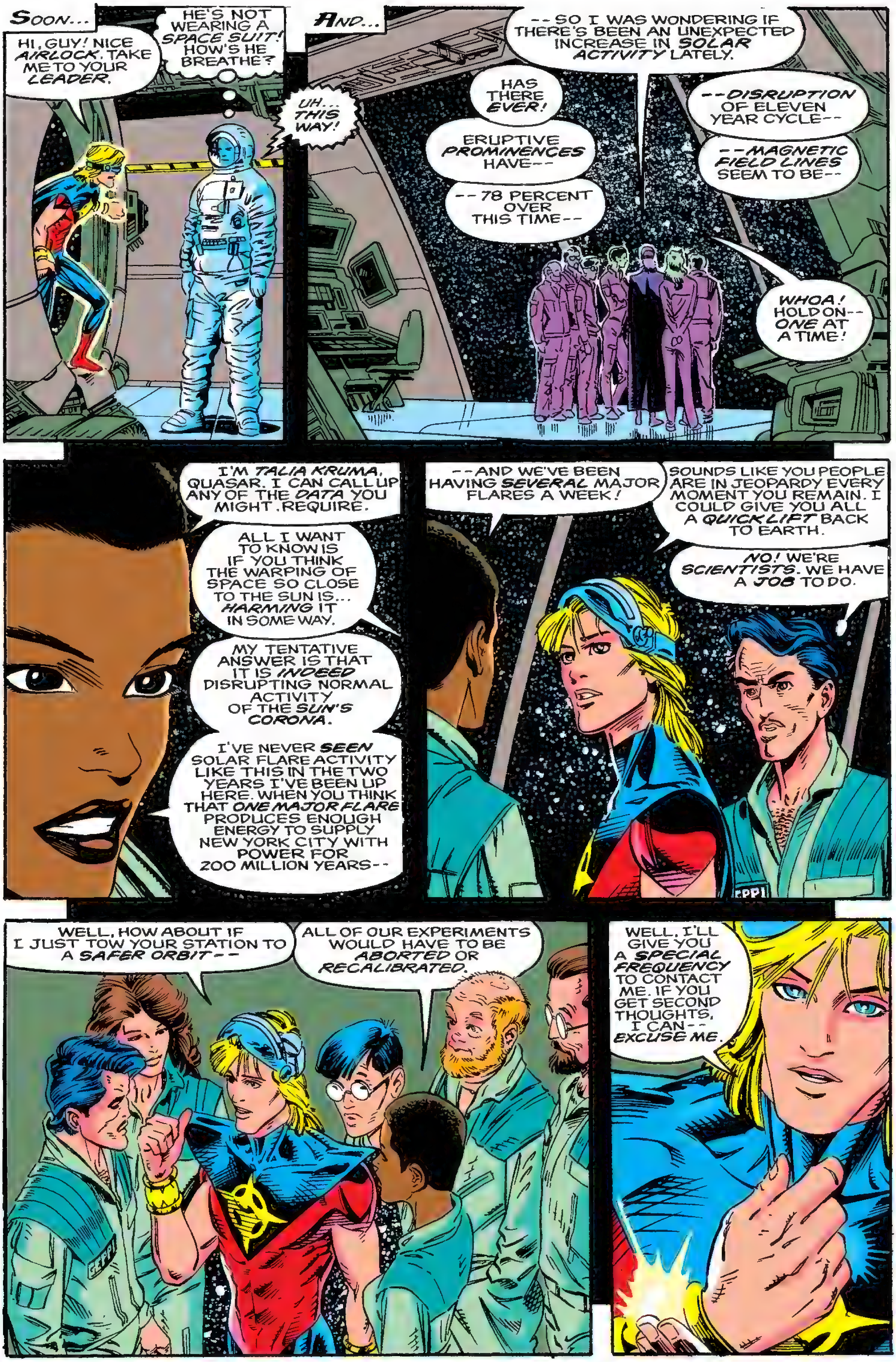
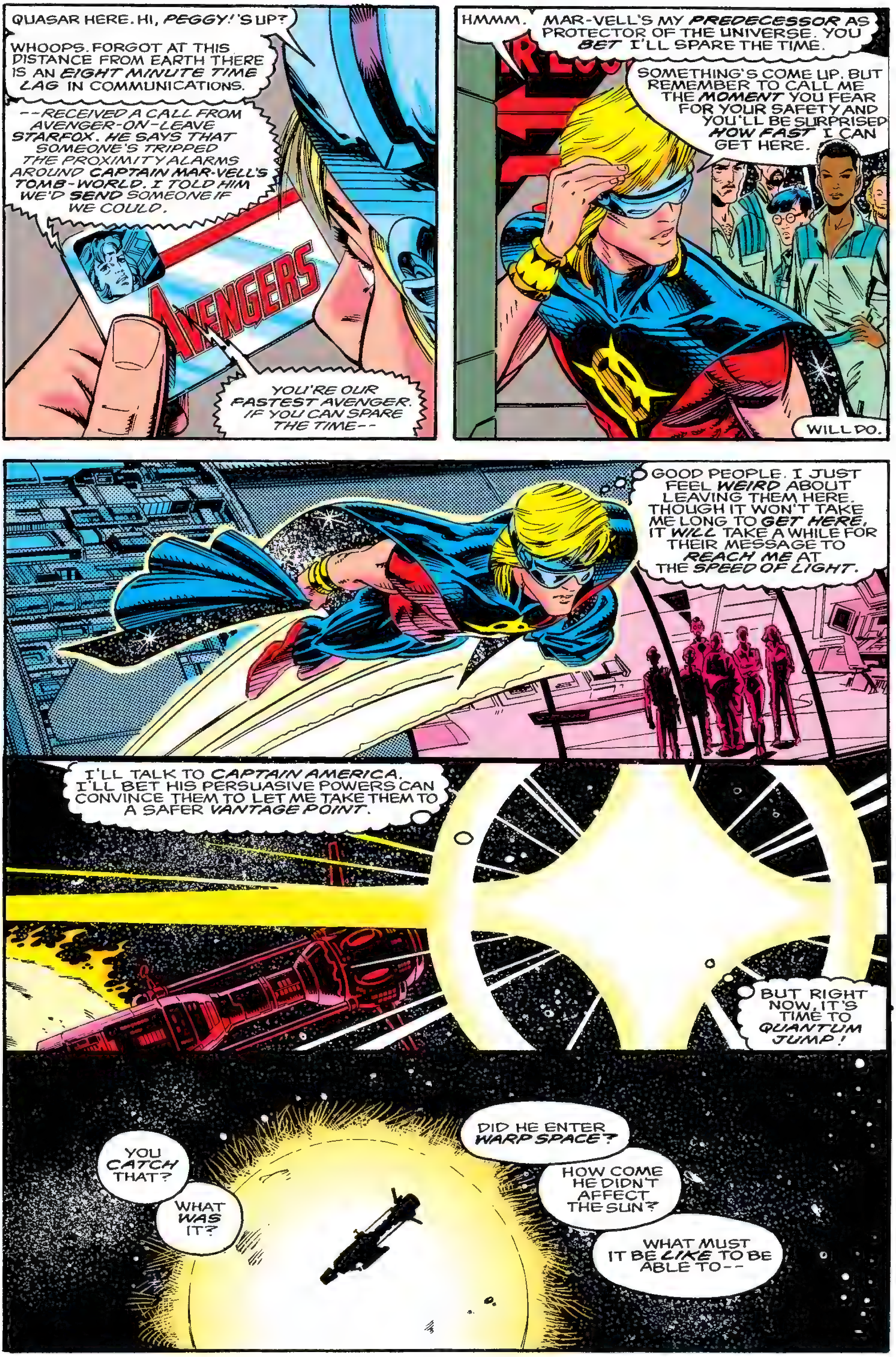
FEATURING: FROM THE PAGES OF THE X-MEN®
THE IMPERIAL GUARD!
ASSAULT...
...ON MAR-VELL'S TOMB


Stan Lee PRESENTS:
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 3
QUASAR
THE ALIEN SHI'AR HAVE CAPTURED THE PSYCHE-MAGNETRON, A KREE DEVICE OF STRATEGIC VALUE IN THEIR WAR AGAINST THE KREE EMPIRE! THAT IS, UNLESS THE COSMIC AVENGER QUASAR CAN INTERCEPT THEM BEFORE THEY WARP THROUGH THE STARGATE NEAR EARTH'S SUN. . .
THE EARTH IS ROUGHLY 93 MILLION MILES FROM THE SUN. RIGHT NOW EARTH'S OWN PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE IS ROUGHLY TWO MILLION MILES AWAY.
BLAST! MISSED IT BY THAT MUCH!
QUASAR TO AVENGERS WEST. I FAILED TO INTERCEPT THE STARSHIP. WHEN IT WARPED INTO HYPERSPACE, THE GOOD OL' SUN FLARED UP AND OBLITERATED THE TRAIL SO I COULDN'T FOLLOW.
REALLY SORRY ABOUT THAT. UNLESS YOU HAVE A BETTER PLAN, I'M GOING TO STICK AROUND HERE A BIT, SEE IF I CAN DETERMINE IF THE SOLAR ACTIVITY WAS COINCIDENTAL--
--OR TRIGGERED BY THE HYPERSPACE OPENING. QUASAR OUT.
THE TOMB OF MAR-VELL

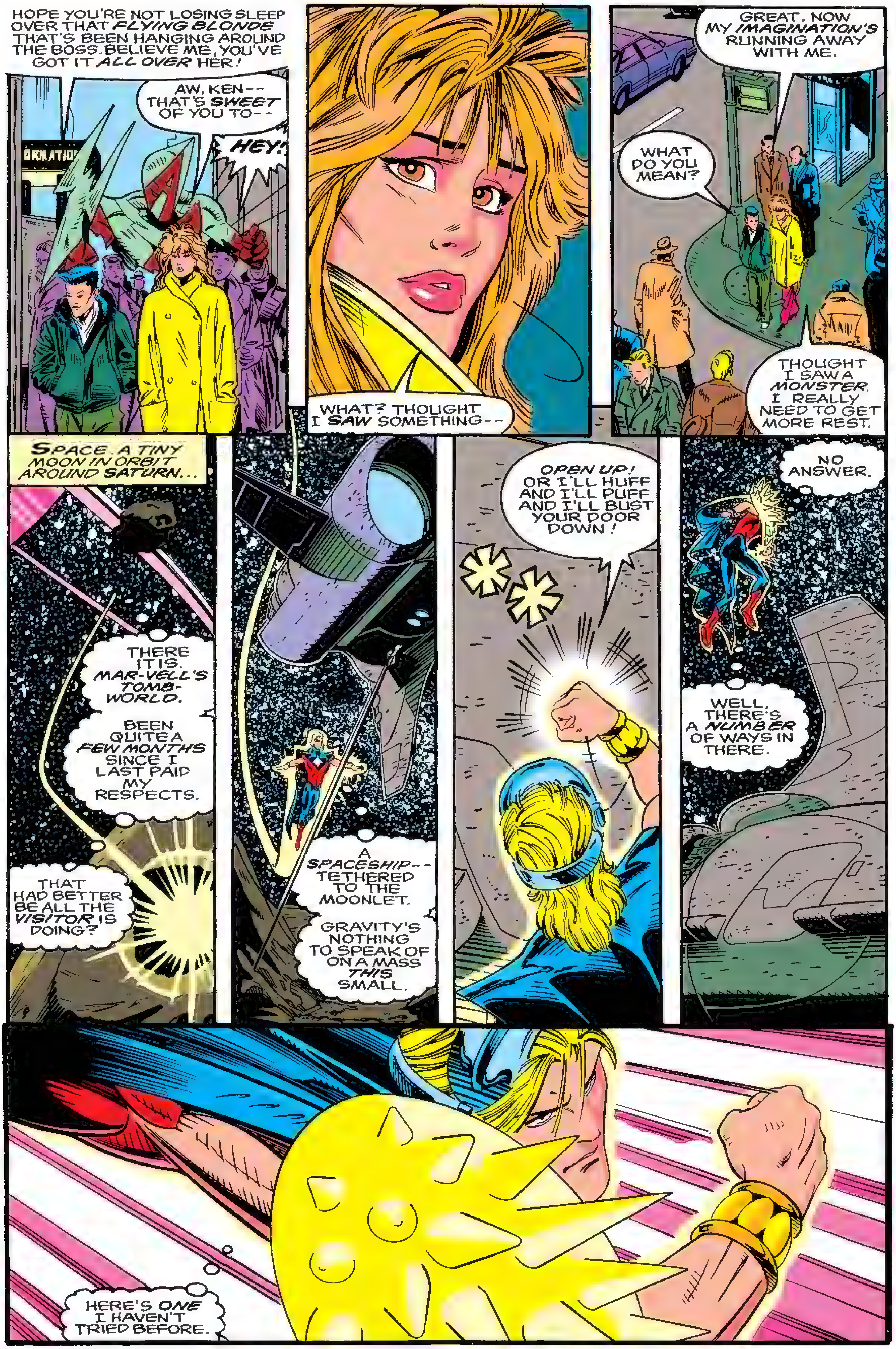
MARK GRUENWALD • GREG CAPULLO • HARRY CANDELARIO • JANICE CHIANG • JOE ROSAS • KELLY CORVESE • TOM DeFALCO
STORY PENCIL ART INK ART LETTER ART COLOR ART EDIT ART POP TART

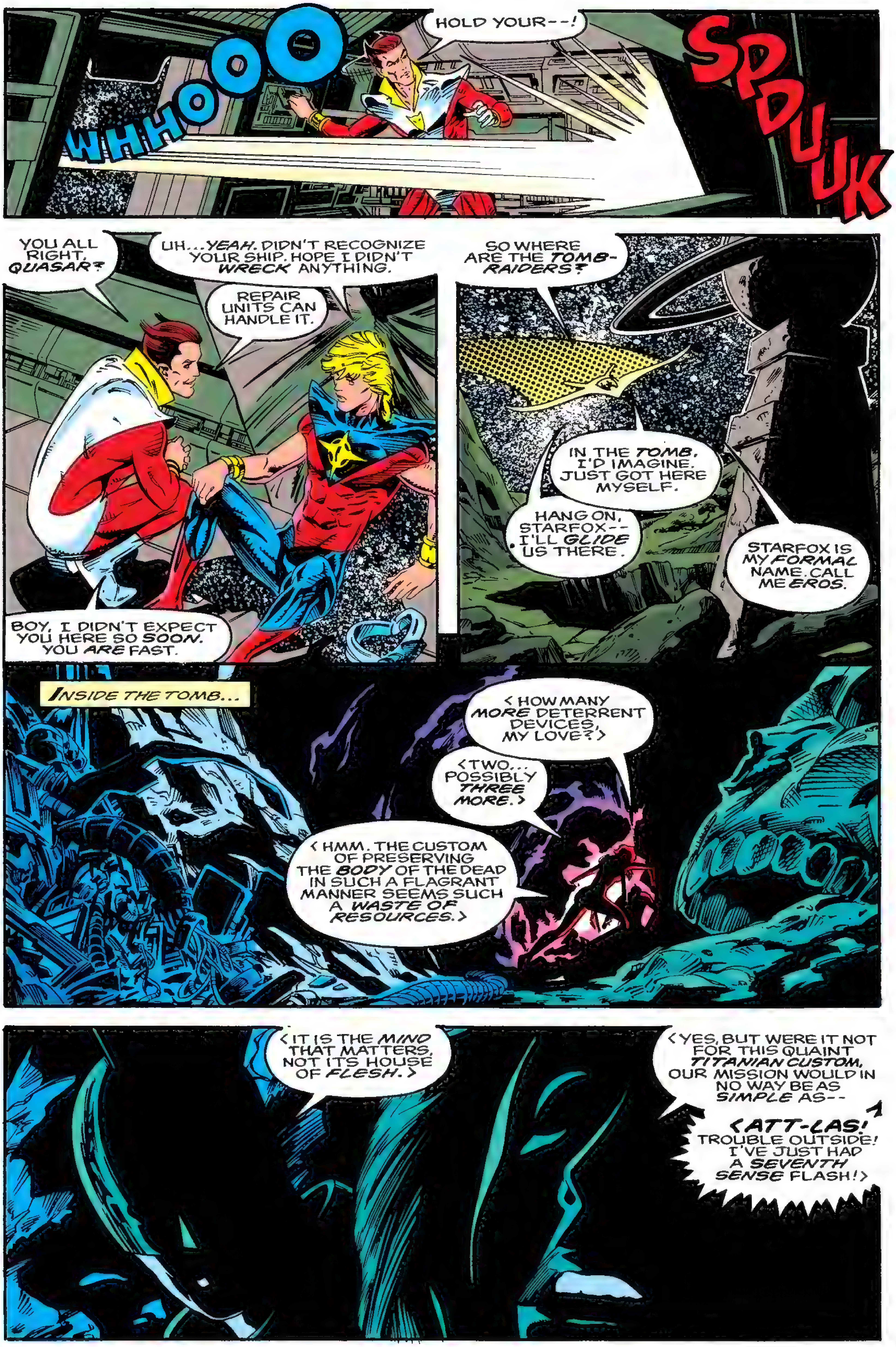

OOP, HERE COMES *ANOTHER FLARE* RIGHT TOWARD ME--!
CAN'T GET THROUGH MY *ENERGY AURA*, FORTUNATELY. THE *QUANTUM-FORCE* IS A LOT STRONGER THAN THE FLAME OF A MEDIUM-SIZED YELLOW STAR.
THIS IS *NOT GOOD*. THE SUN'S ACTING LIKE SOMEBODY DUMPED A LOAD OF *FIRECRACKERS* ON IT. WISH I KNEW WHAT'S *NORMAL* FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR. THEN I'D KNOW HOW *CONCERNED* TO BE.
WAIT--WASN'T THERE SOME MANNED *SOLAR OBSERVATORY* OUTSIDE MERCURY'S ORBIT? *STARCORE*, IF MEMORY SERVES.
IF *ANYBODY* KNOWS RECORDS ABOUT THE SUN'S ACTIVITY, *THEY* DO!
LET ME TRY TO SCREEN OUT THE SUN'S *STATIC* AND *LOCK* IN ON IT.
THERE IT IS.
ATTENTION, STARCORE! THIS IS *QUASAR*, ONE OF THE AVENGERS. REQUESTING PERMISSION TO *COME ABOARD*, IF I MAY. OVER.

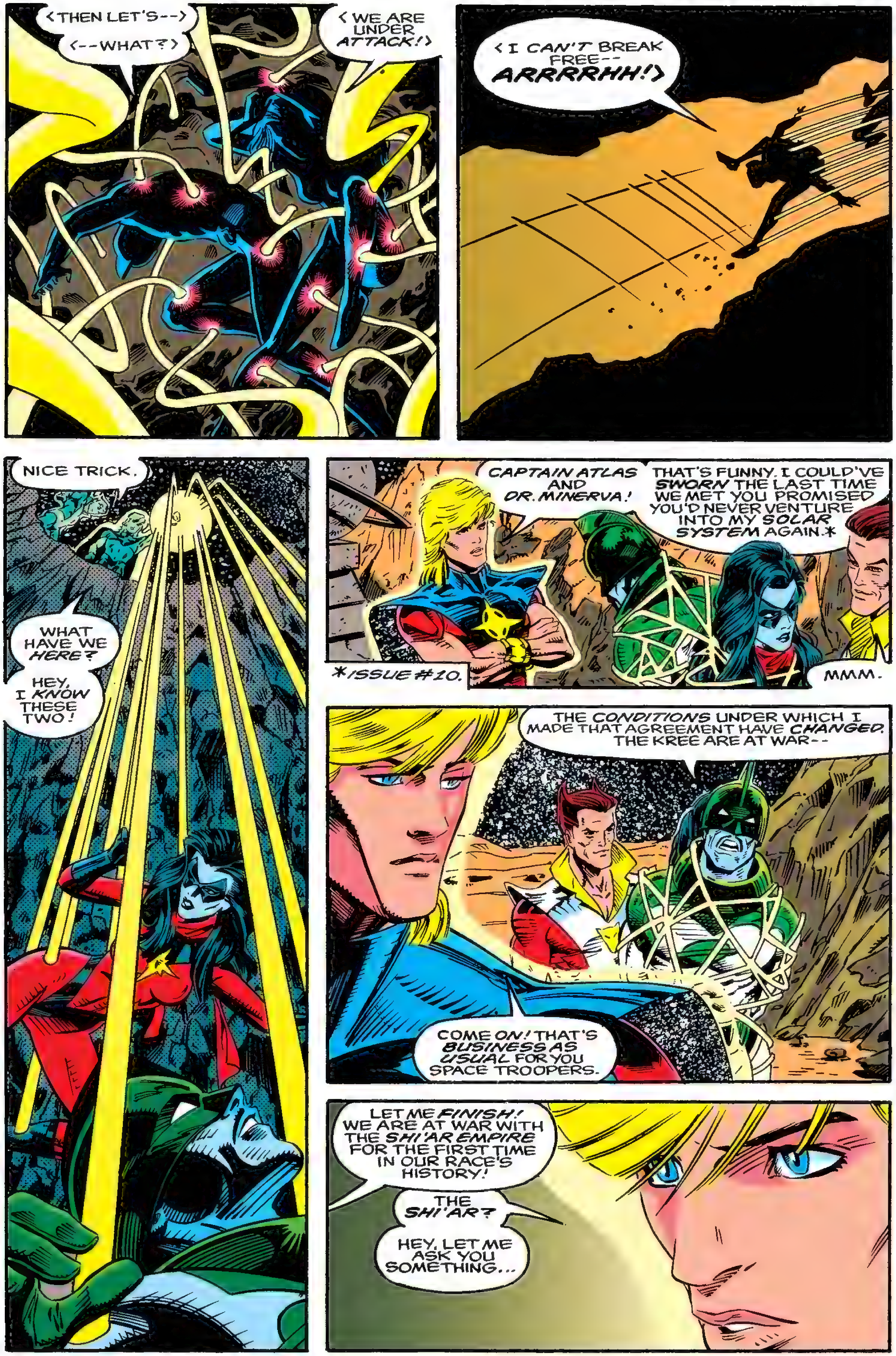

SOON...
HI, GUY! NICE AIRLOCK. TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER.
HE'S NOT WEARING A SPACE SUIT! HOW'S HE BREATHE?
UH... THIS WAY!
AND...
--SO I WAS WONDERING IF THERE'S BEEN AN UNEXPECTED INCREASE IN SOLAR ACTIVITY LATELY.
HAS THERE EVER!
ERUPTIVE PROMINENCES HAVE--
--78 PERCENT OVER THIS TIME--
--DISRUPTION OF ELEVEN YEAR CYCLE--
--MAGNETIC FIELD LINES SEEM TO BE--
WHOA! HOLD ON-- ONE AT A TIME!
I'M TALIA KRUMA, QUASAR. I CAN CALL UP ANY OF THE DATA YOU MIGHT REQUIRE.
ALL I WANT TO KNOW IS IF YOU THINK THE WARPING OF SPACE SO CLOSE TO THE SUN IS... HARMING IT IN SOME WAY.
MY TENTATIVE ANSWER IS THAT IT IS INDEED DISRUPTING NORMAL ACTIVITY OF THE SUN'S CORONA.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SOLAR FLARE ACTIVITY LIKE THIS IN THE TWO YEARS I'VE BEEN UP HERE. WHEN YOU THINK THAT ONE MAJOR FLARE PRODUCES ENOUGH ENERGY TO SUPPLY NEW YORK CITY WITH POWER FOR 200 MILLION YEARS--
--AND WE'VE BEEN HAVING SEVERAL MAJOR FLARES A WEEK!
SOUNDS LIKE YOU PEOPLE ARE IN JEOPARDY EVERY MOMENT YOU REMAIN. I COULD GIVE YOU ALL A QUICK LIFT BACK TO EARTH.
NO! WE'RE SCIENTISTS. WE HAVE A JOB TO DO.
WELL, HOW ABOUT IF I JUST TOW YOUR STATION TO A SAFER ORBIT--
ALL OF OUR EXPERIMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE ABORTED OR RECALIBRATED.
WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU A SPECIAL FREQUENCY TO CONTACT ME. IF YOU GET SECOND THOUGHTS, I CAN-- EXCUSE ME.

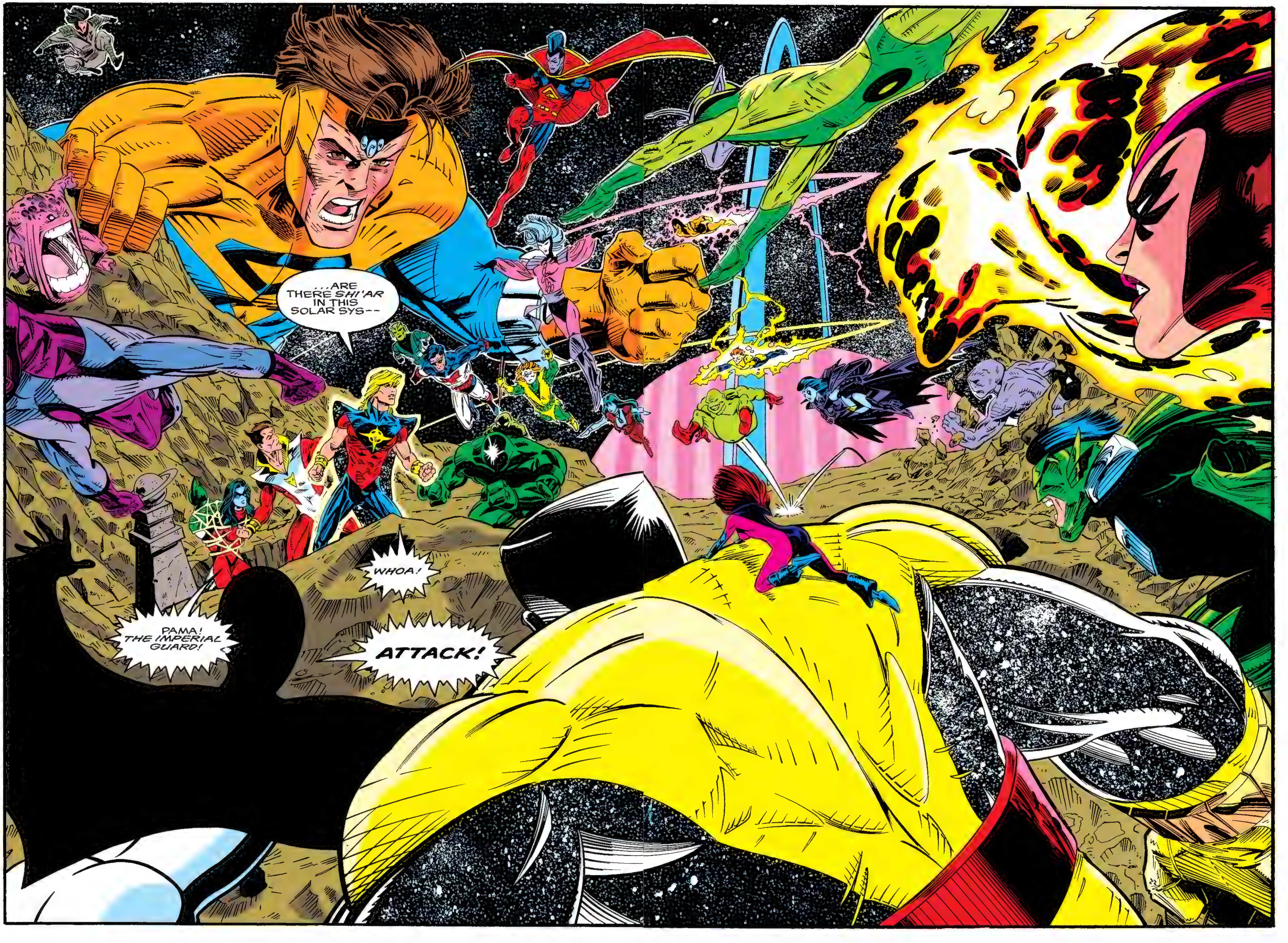

QUASAR HERE. HI, PEGGY! 'S UP?
WHOOPS. FORGOT AT THIS DISTANCE FROM EARTH THERE IS AN EIGHT MINUTE TIME LAG IN COMMUNICATIONS.
--RECEIVED A CALL FROM AVENGER-ON-LEAVE STARFOX. HE SAYS THAT SOMEONE'S TRIPPED THE PROXIMITY ALARMS AROUND CAPTAIN MAR-VELL'S TOMB-WORLD. I TOLD HIM WE'D SEND SOMEONE IF WE COULD.
AVENGERS
YOU'RE OUR FASTEST AVENGER. IF YOU CAN SPARE THE TIME--
HMMM.
MAR-VELL'S MY PREDECESSOR AS PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE. YOU BET I'LL SPARE THE TIME.
SOMETHING'S COME UP, BUT REMEMBER TO CALL ME THE MOMENT YOU FEAR FOR YOUR SAFETY AND YOU'LL BE SURPRISED HOW FAST I CAN GET HERE.
WILL DO.
GOOD PEOPLE. I JUST FEEL WEIRD ABOUT LEAVING THEM HERE. THOUGH IT WON'T TAKE ME LONG TO GET HERE, IT WILL TAKE A WHILE FOR THEIR MESSAGE TO REACH ME AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT.
I'LL TALK TO CAPTAIN AMERICA. I'LL BET HIS PERSUASIVE POWERS CAN CONVINCE THEM TO LET ME TAKE THEM TO A SAFER VANTAGE POINT.
BUT RIGHT NOW, IT'S TIME TO QUANTUM JUMP!
YOU CATCH THAT?
WHAT WAS IT?
DID HE ENTER WARP SPACE?
HOW COME HE DIDN'T AFFECT THE SUN?
WHAT MUST IT BE LIKE TO BE ABLE TO--

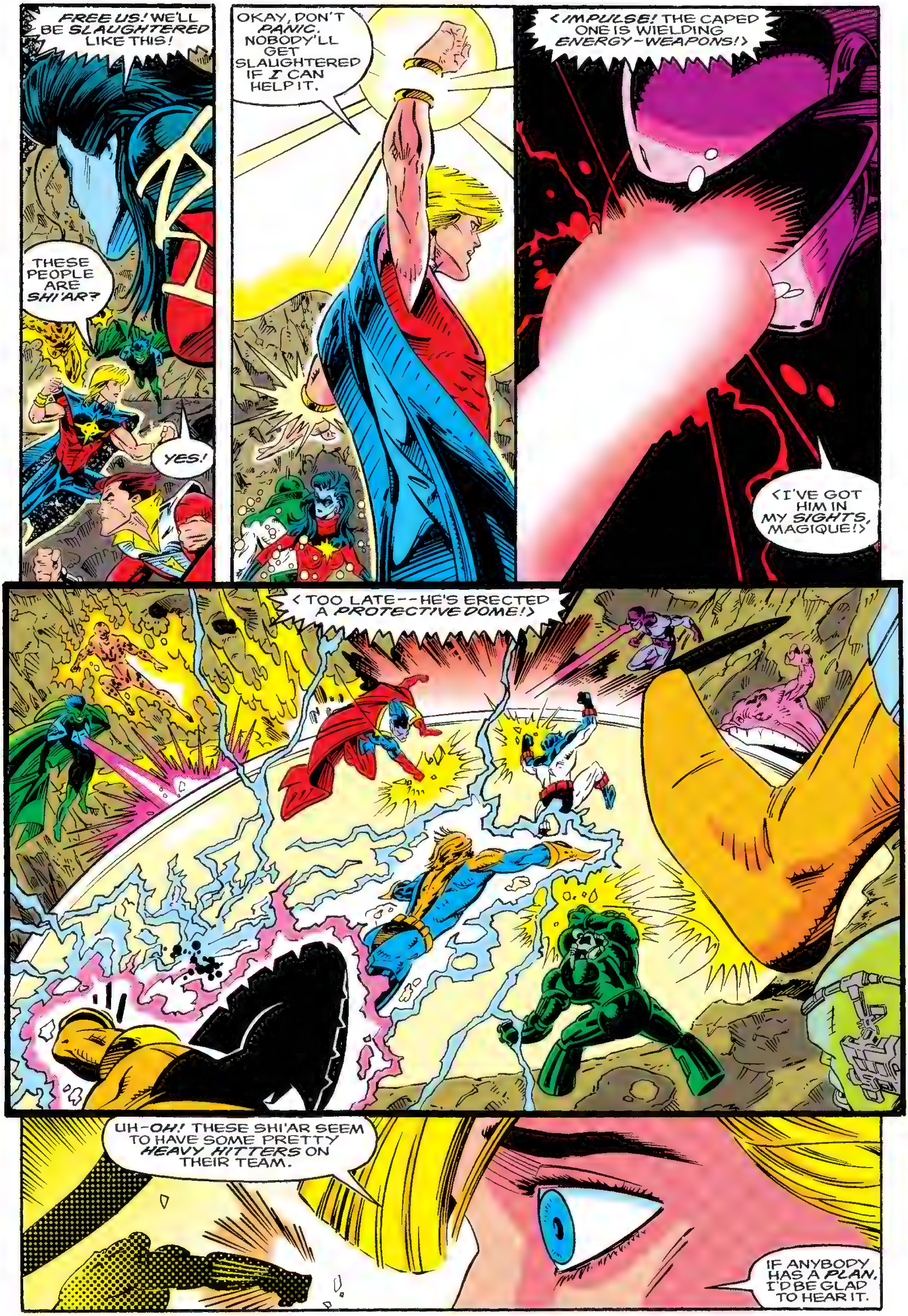
THE GOOD OL' *QUANTUM ZONE*-- SHORTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO ASTRONOMICAL POINTS.
RELAXING IN HERE. GOOD PLACE TO THINK.
WHAT A *MADHOUSE* MY LIFE'S BEEN LATELY--SO MANY THINGS UP IN THE AIR...
OH, *MAN*-- I JUST REALIZED I HAVEN'T CHECKED IN ON MY *COSMIC GODDAUGHTER* IN A WHILE. HOPE SHE HASN'T BEEN *BORED*.
DON'T KNOW HOW SHE *COULD* BE. THE *COSMIC AWARENESS* SHE INHERITED FROM HER FA--I MEAN *MOTHER, EON*... SHOULD KEEP HER ENTERTAINED. IT KEPT ME AMUSED WHILE *I* HAD IT.*
HEY, *EPOCH*-- IT'S QUASAR. YOU *THERE*, LITTLE SPUDLING?
YES, QUASAR. FIGURATIVELY, ANYWAY.
HOW YOU *DOING*?
COMPARED TO *WHAT*?
*ISSUES #23-25.
NEVER MIND. I'VE GOT A *FAVOR* TO ASK. COULD YOU USE YOUR BUDDING COSMIC AWARENESS TO INVESTIGATE THE WHEREABOUTS OF THIS *LADY* I USED TO HANG AROUND WITH... *MOONDRAGON*?
I WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT CONNECTION SHE HAS WITH MY NEW EMPLOYEE, *H.D. STECKLEY*...
YOU MEAN THE WOMAN THAT YOUR OTHER CO-WORKERS ARE NOW DISCUSSING...
SOMETHING *WRONG*, KAYLA? YOU SEEM A BIT *OUT OF IT* TODAY.
SO THE NEW H.D. GOT YOU CONVINCED SHE'S *LEGIT* YET?
I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS.
HAVEN'T BEEN *SLEEPING* TOO WELL THE LAST FEW NIGHTS.

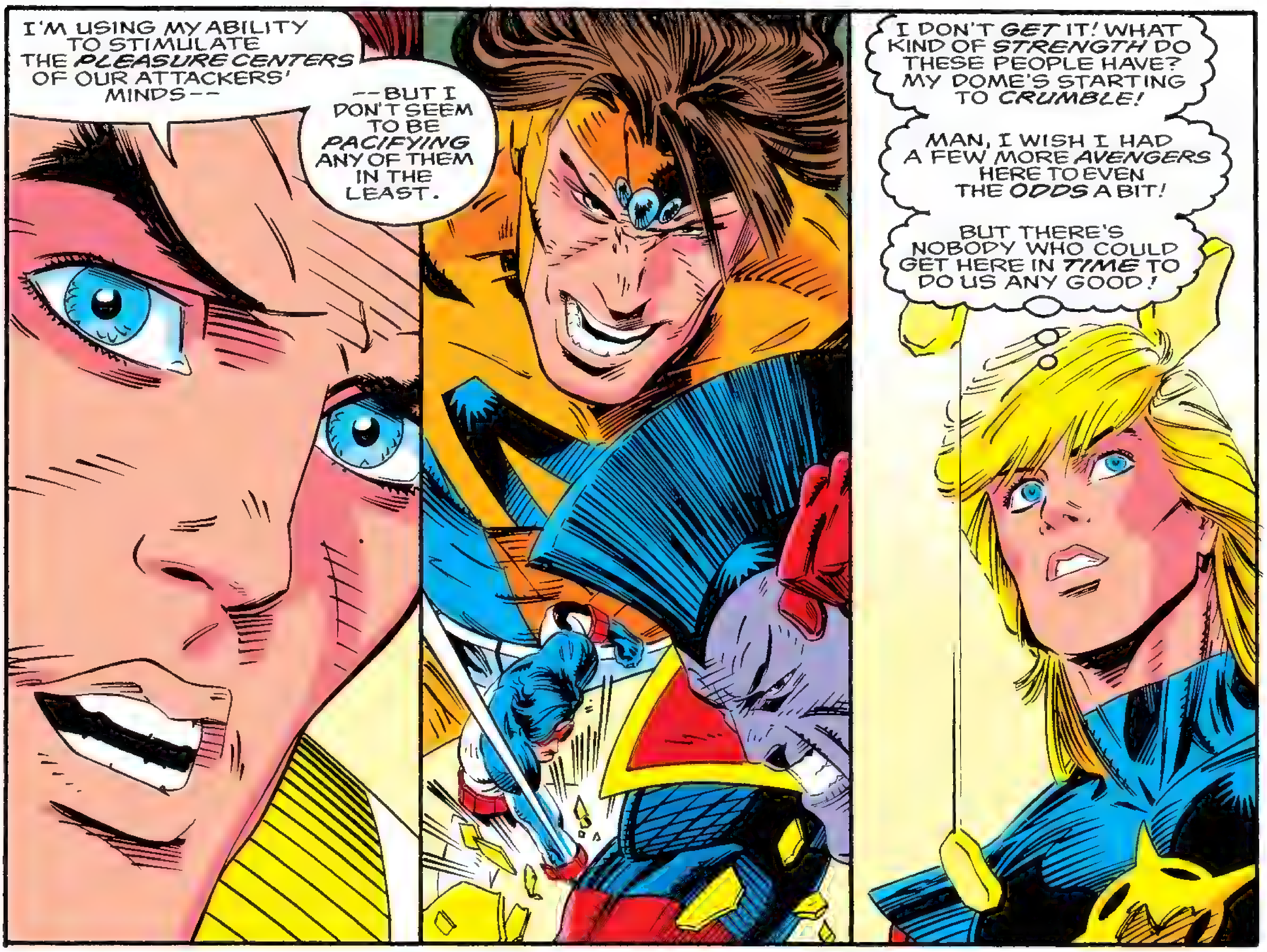

HOPE YOU'RE NOT LOSING SLEEP OVER THAT *FLYING BLONDE* THAT'S BEEN HANGING AROUND THE BOSS. BELIEVE ME, YOU'VE GOT IT *ALL OVER* HER!
AW, KEN-- THAT'S *SWEET* OF YOU TO--
HEY!
ORMATIO
WHAT? THOUGHT I *SAW* SOMETHING--
GREAT. NOW MY *IMAGINATION'S* RUNNING AWAY WITH ME.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THOUGHT I SAW A *MONSTER*. I REALLY NEED TO GET MORE REST.
SPACE. A TINY MOON IN ORBIT AROUND SATURN...
THERE IT IS. *MAR-VELL'S TOMB-WORLD*.
BEEN QUITE A *FEW MONTHS* SINCE I LAST PAID MY RESPECTS.
THAT HAD BETTER BE ALL THE *VISITOR* IS DOING?
A *SPACESHIP*-- TETHERED TO THE MOONLET.
GRAVITY'S NOTHING TO SPEAK OF ON A MASS *THIS* SMALL.
OPEN UP! OR I'LL HUFF AND I'LL PUFF AND I'LL BUST YOUR DOOR DOWN!
NO ANSWER.
WELL, THERE'S A *NUMBER* OF WAYS IN THERE.
HERE'S *ONE* I HAVEN'T TRIED BEFORE.

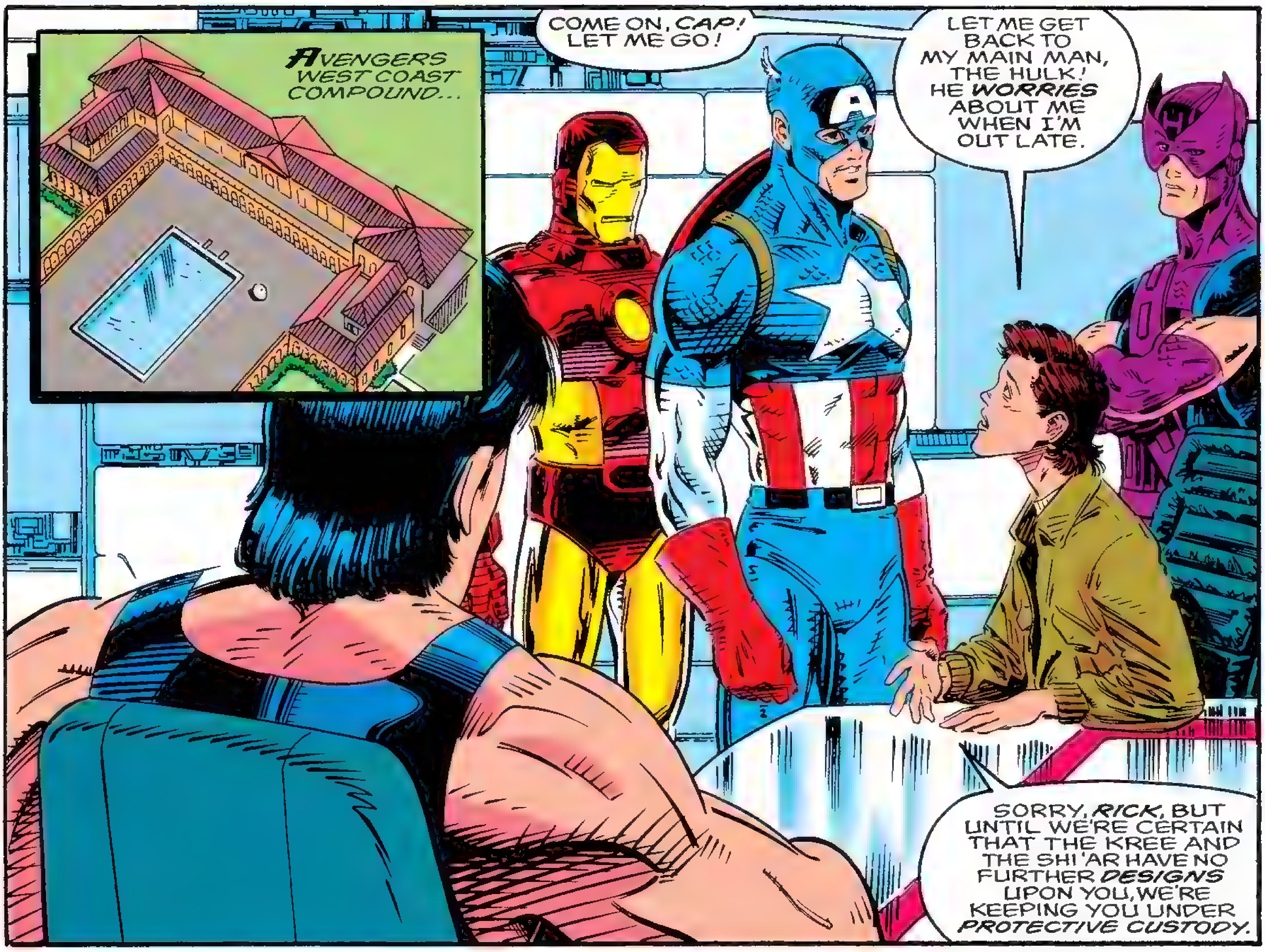

WHHOOOO
HOLD YOUR--!
SPDUUK
YOU ALL RIGHT, QUASAR?
UH...YEAH. DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOUR SHIP. HOPE I DIDN'T WRECK ANYTHING.
REPAIR UNITS CAN HANDLE IT.
BOY, I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU HERE SO SOON. YOU ARE FAST.
SO WHERE ARE THE TOMB-RAIDERS?
IN THE TOMB, I'D IMAGINE. JUST GOT HERE MYSELF.
HANG ON, STARFOX-- I'LL GLIDE US THERE.
STARFOX IS MY FORMAL NAME. CALL ME EROS.
INSIDE THE TOMB...
<HOW MANY MORE DETERRENT DEVICES, MY LOVE?>
<TWO... POSSIBLY THREE MORE.>
<HMM. THE CUSTOM OF PRESERVING THE BODY OF THE DEAD IN SUCH A FLAGRANT MANNER SEEMS SUCH A WASTE OF RESOURCES.>
<IT IS THE MIND THAT MATTERS, NOT ITS HOUSE OF FLESH.>
<YES, BUT WERE IT NOT FOR THIS QUAINT TITANIAN CUSTOM, OUR MISSION WOULD IN NO WAY BE AS SIMPLE AS--
<ATT-LAS! TROUBLE OUTSIDE! I'VE JUST HAD A SEVENTH SENSE FLASH!>

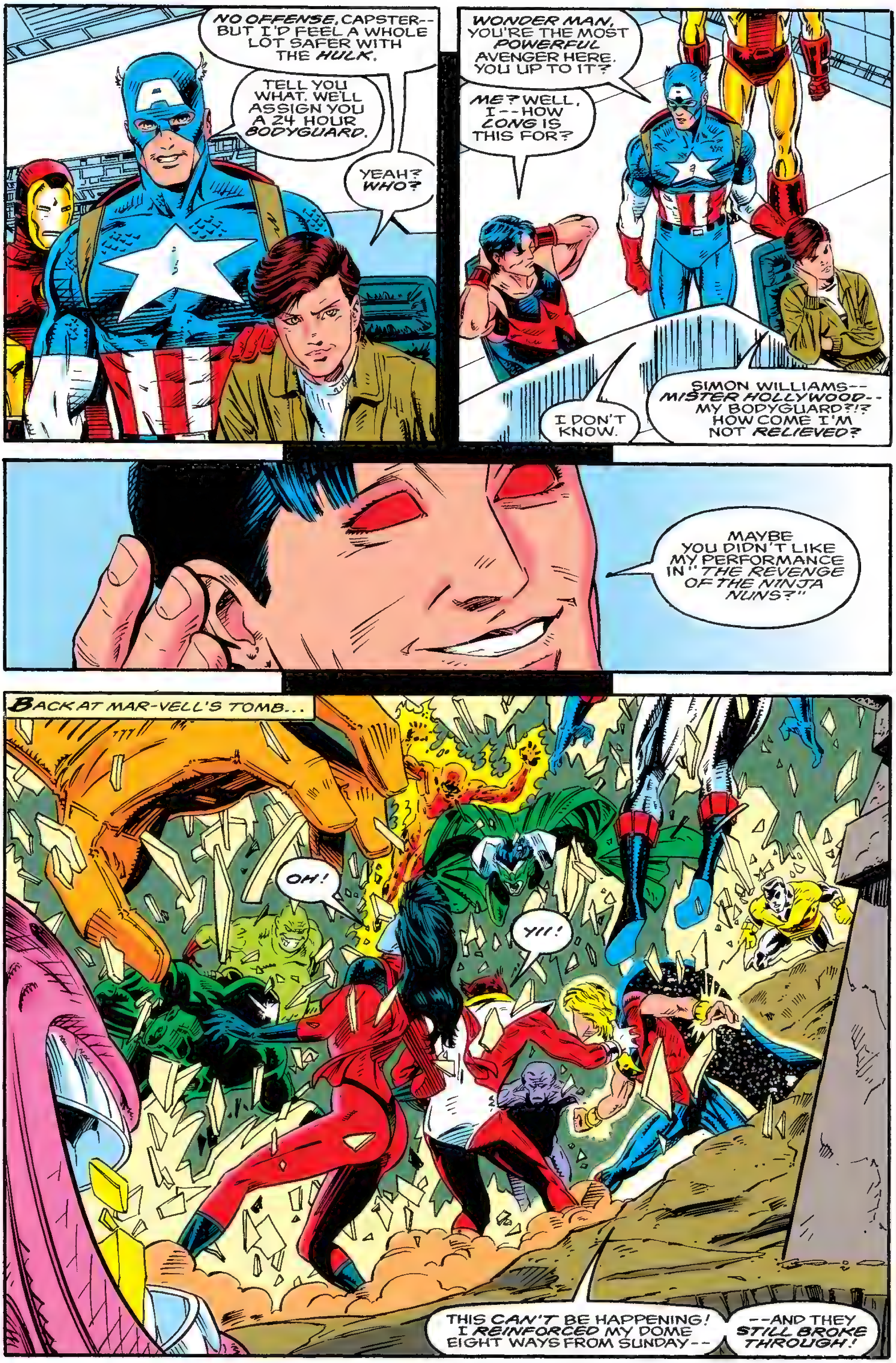

‹THEN LET'S--›
‹--WHAT?›
‹WE ARE UNDER *ATTACK!*›
‹I *CAN'T* BREAK FREE-- *ARRRRHH!*›
NICE TRICK.
WHAT HAVE WE *HERE?*
HEY, I *KNOW* THESE TWO!
CAPTAIN ATLAS AND *DR. MINERVA!*
THAT'S FUNNY. I COULD'VE *SWORN* THE LAST TIME WE MET YOU PROMISED YOU'D NEVER VENTURE INTO MY *SOLAR SYSTEM* AGAIN.*
*ISSUE #10.
MMM.
THE *CONDITIONS* UNDER WHICH I MADE THAT AGREEMENT HAVE *CHANGED.* THE KREE ARE AT WAR--
COME *ON!* THAT'S *BUSINESS AS USUAL* FOR YOU SPACE TROOPERS.
LET ME *FINISH!* WE ARE AT WAR WITH THE *SHI'AR EMPIRE* FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR RACE'S HISTORY!
THE *SHI'AR?*
HEY, LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING...

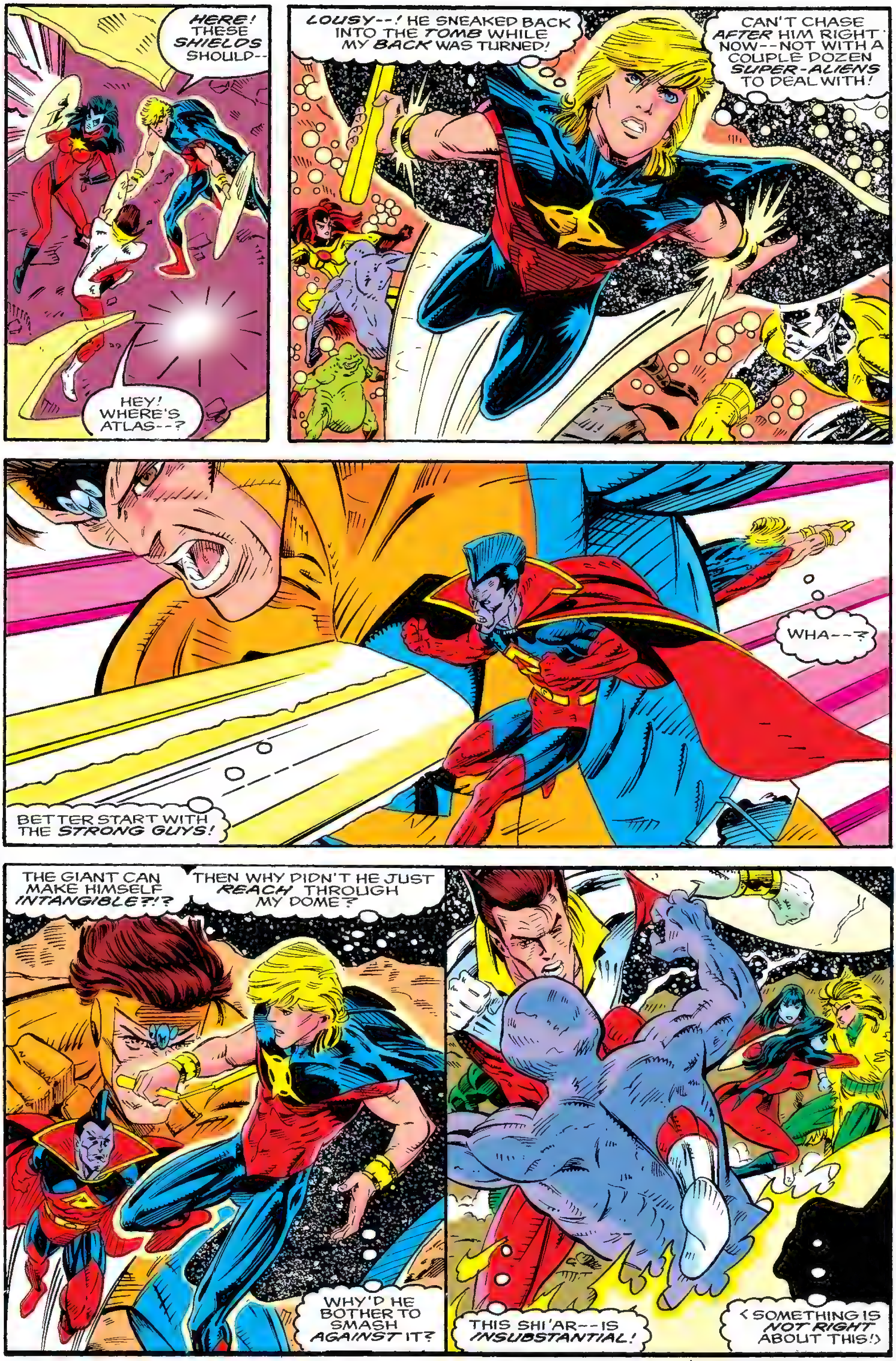

...ARE THERE SHI'AR IN THIS SOLAR SYS--
WHOA!
PAMA! THE IMPERIAL GUARD!
ATTACK!

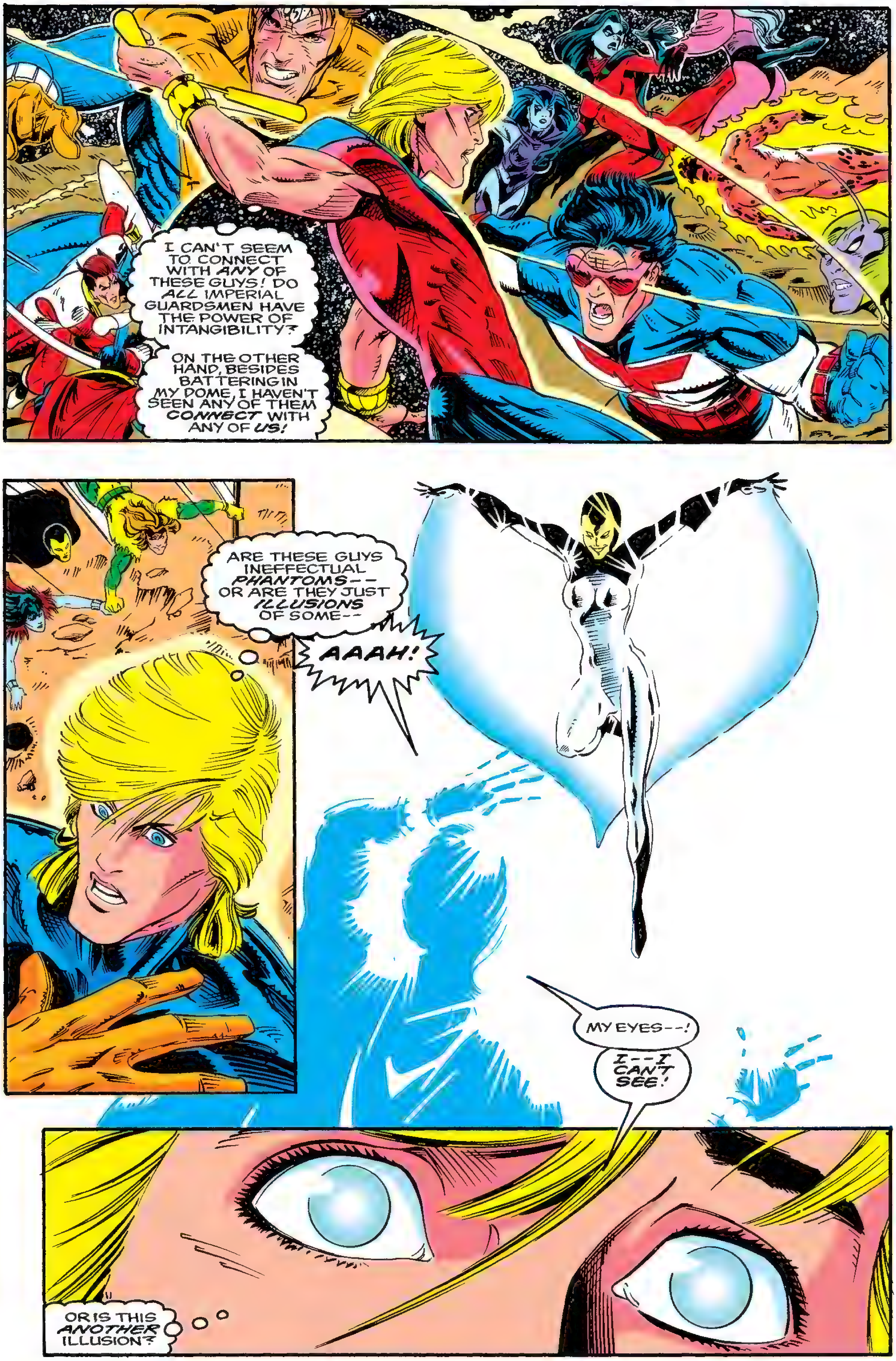

FREE US! WE'LL BE SLAUGHTERED LIKE THIS!
THESE PEOPLE ARE SHI'AR?
YES!
OKAY, DON'T PANIC. NOBODY'LL GET SLAUGHTERED IF I CAN HELP IT.
<IMPULSE! THE CAPED ONE IS WIELDING ENERGY-WEAPONS!>
<I'VE GOT HIM IN MY SIGHTS, MAGIQUE!>
<TOO LATE--HE'S ERECTED A PROTECTIVE DOME!>
UH-OH! THESE SHI'AR SEEM TO HAVE SOME PRETTY HEAVY HITTERS ON THEIR TEAM.
IF ANYBODY HAS A PLAN, I'D BE GLAD TO HEAR IT.

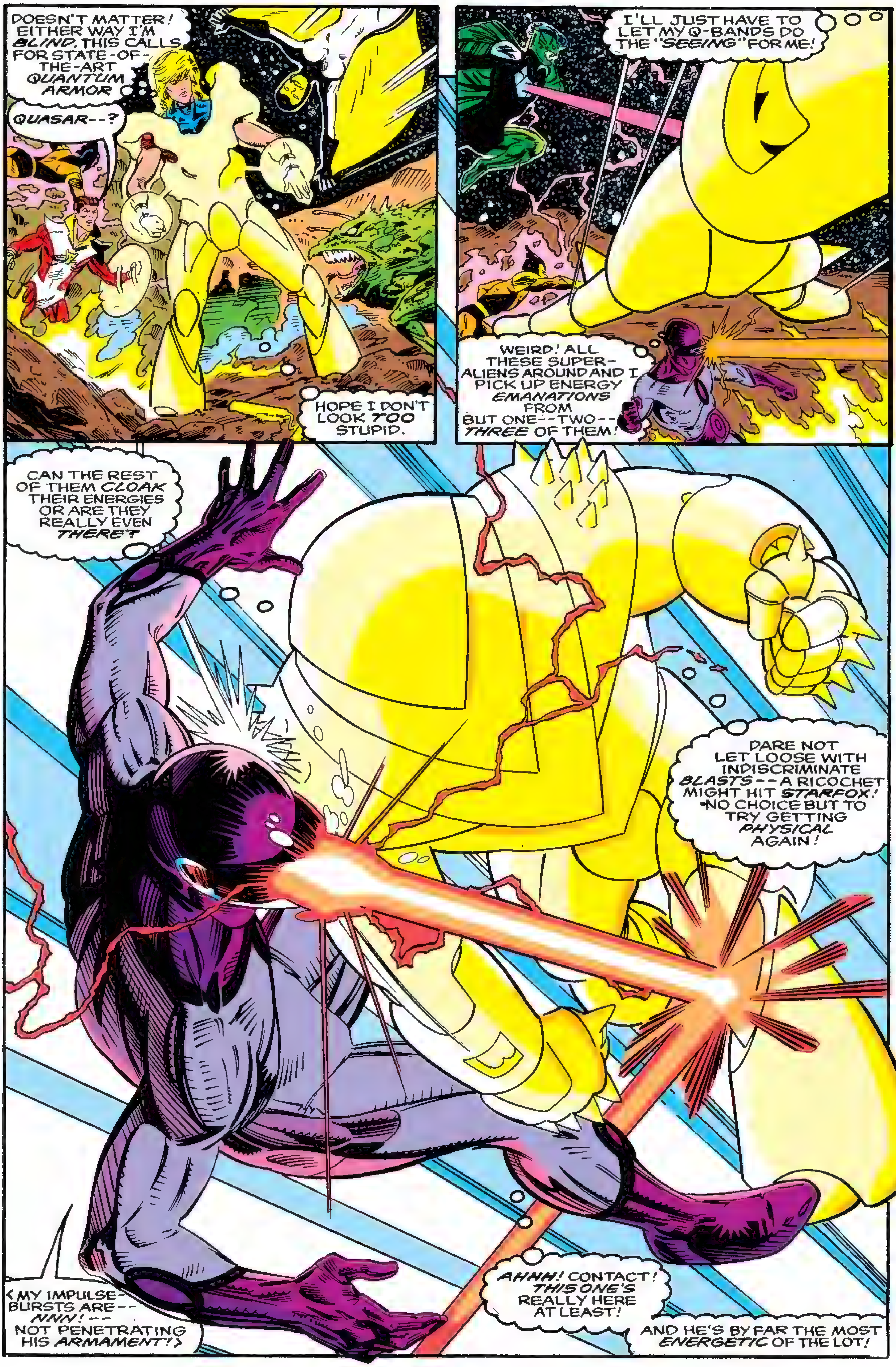

I'M USING MY ABILITY TO STIMULATE THE *PLEASURE CENTERS* OF OUR ATTACKERS' MINDS--
--BUT I DON'T SEEM TO BE *PACIFYING* ANY OF THEM IN THE LEAST.
I DON'T *GET* IT! WHAT KIND OF *STRENGTH* DO THESE PEOPLE HAVE? MY DOME'S STARTING TO *CRUMBLE!*
MAN, I WISH I HAD A FEW MORE *AVENGERS* HERE TO EVEN THE *ODDS* A BIT!
BUT THERE'S NOBODY WHO COULD GET HERE IN *TIME* TO DO US ANY GOOD!

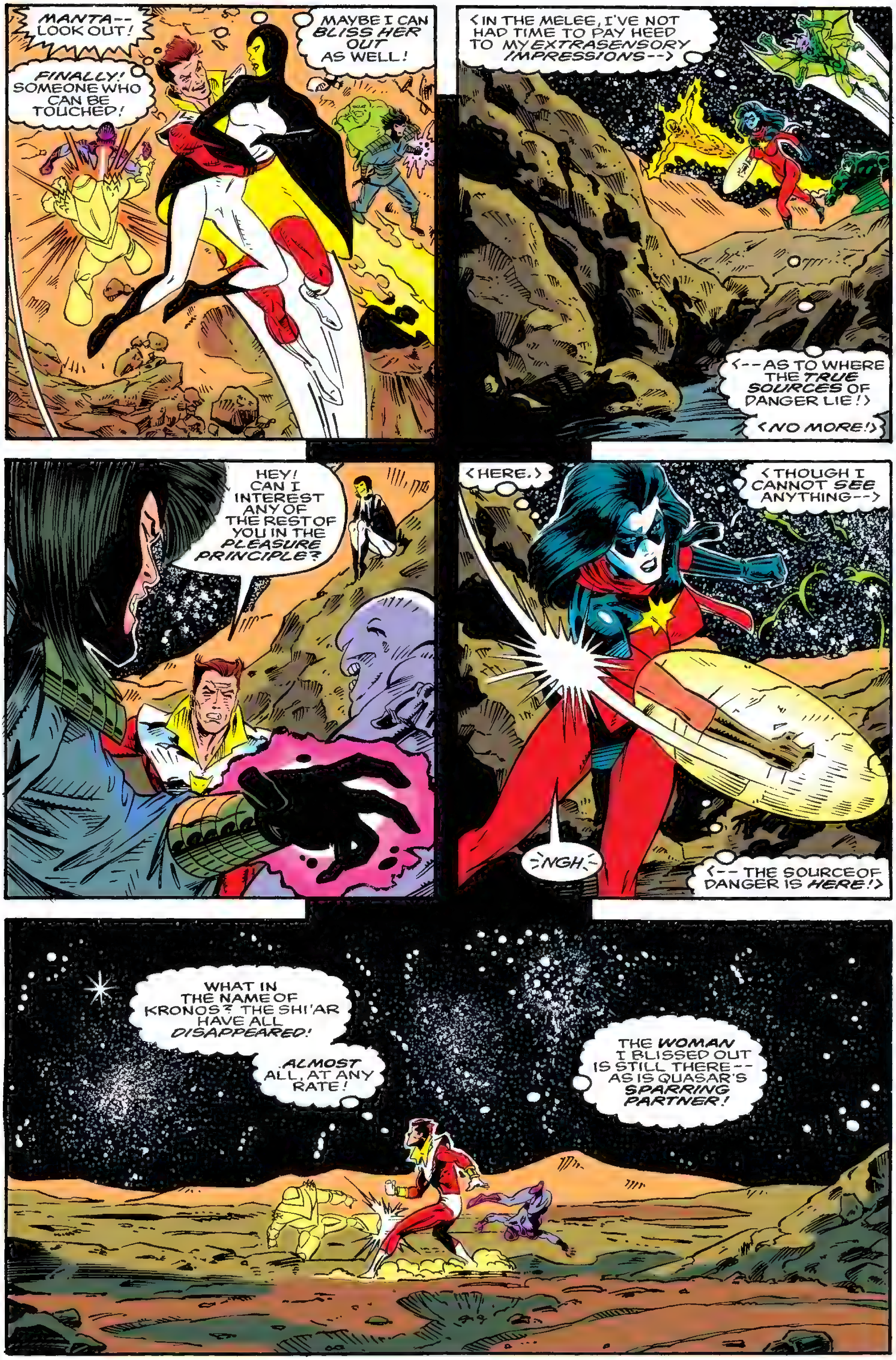

AVENGERS WEST COAST COMPOUND...
COME ON, *CAP!* LET ME GO!
LET ME GET BACK TO MY MAIN MAN, THE HULK! HE *WORRIES* ABOUT ME WHEN I'M OUT LATE.
SORRY, *RICK*, BUT UNTIL WE'RE CERTAIN THAT THE KREE AND THE SHI'AR HAVE NO FURTHER *DESIGNS* UPON YOU, WE'RE KEEPING YOU UNDER *PROTECTIVE CUSTODY.*

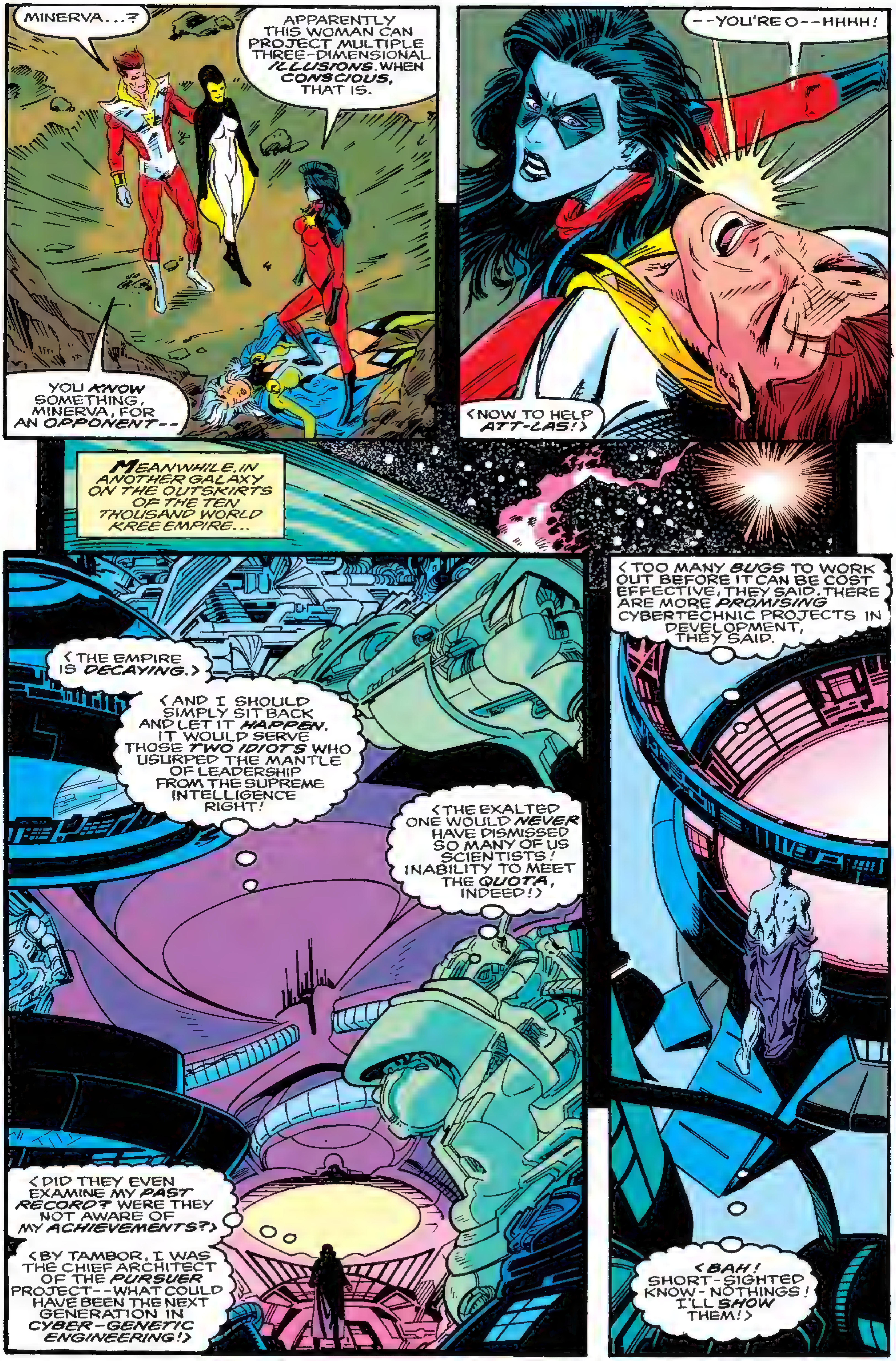

NO OFFENSE, CAPSTER-- BUT I'D FEEL A WHOLE LOT SAFER WITH THE HULK.
TELL YOU WHAT. WE'LL ASSIGN YOU A 24 HOUR BODYGUARD.
YEAH? WHO?
WONDER MAN, YOU'RE THE MOST POWERFUL AVENGER HERE. YOU UP TO IT?
ME? WELL, I--HOW LONG IS THIS FOR?
I DON'T KNOW.
SIMON WILLIAMS-- MISTER HOLLYWOOD-- MY BODYGUARD?!? HOW COME I'M NOT RELIEVED?
MAYBE YOU DIDN'T LIKE MY PERFORMANCE IN "THE REVENGE OF THE NINJA NUNS?"
BACK AT MAR-VELL'S TOMB...
OH!
YII!
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! I REINFORCED MY DOME EIGHT WAYS FROM SUNDAY--
--AND THEY STILL BROKE THROUGH!

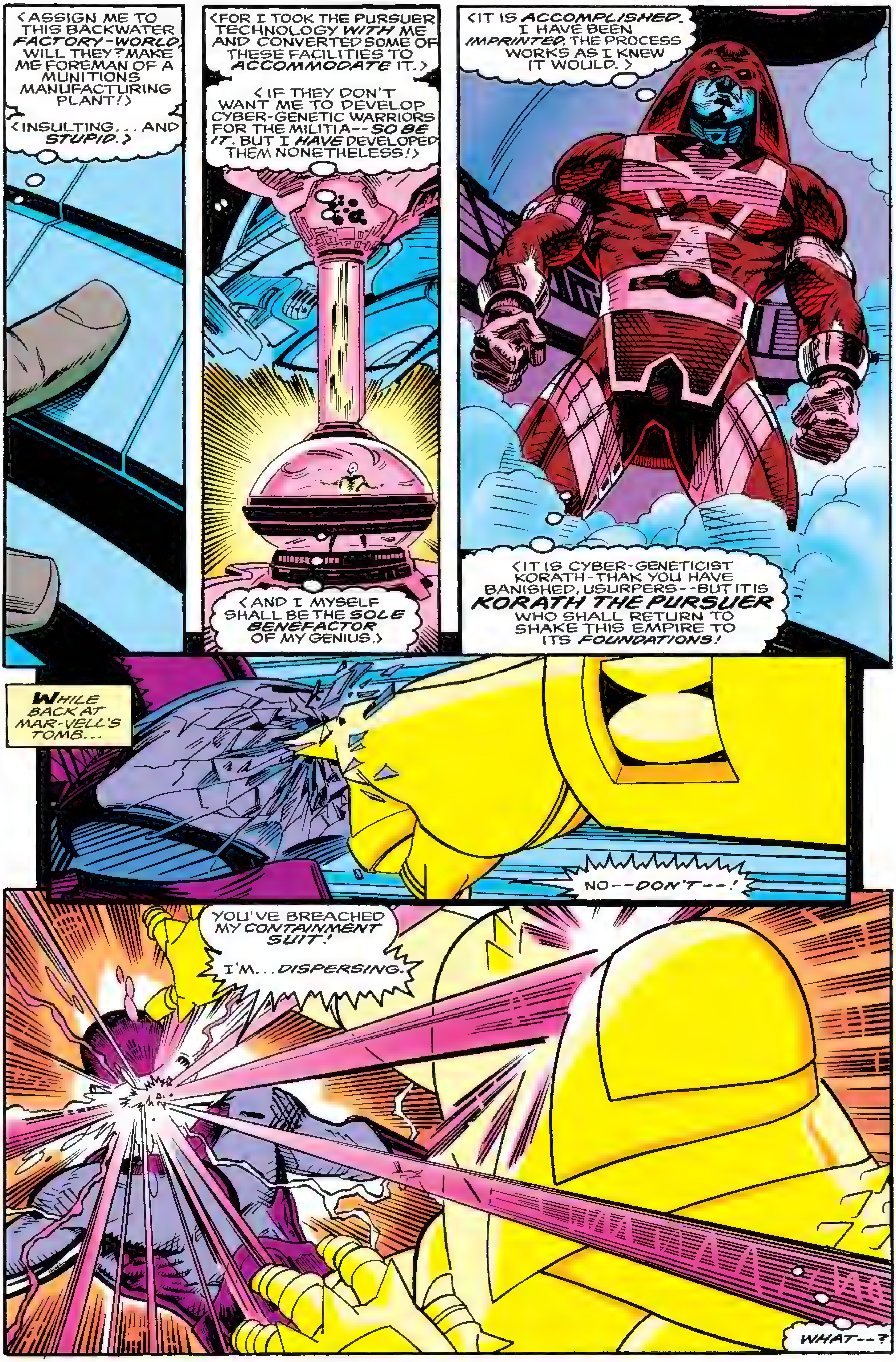

HERE! THESE SHIELDS SHOULD--
HEY! WHERE'S ATLAS--?
LOUSY--! HE SNEAKED BACK INTO THE TOMB WHILE MY BACK WAS TURNED!
CAN'T CHASE AFTER HIM RIGHT NOW--NOT WITH A COUPLE DOZEN SUPER-ALIENS TO DEAL WITH!
WHA--?
BETTER START WITH THE STRONG GUYS!
THE GIANT CAN MAKE HIMSELF INTANGIBLE?!?
THEN WHY DIDN'T HE JUST REACH THROUGH MY DOME?
WHY'D HE BOTHER TO SMASH AGAINST IT?
THIS SHI'AR--IS INSUBSTANTIAL!
‹SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT ABOUT THIS!›

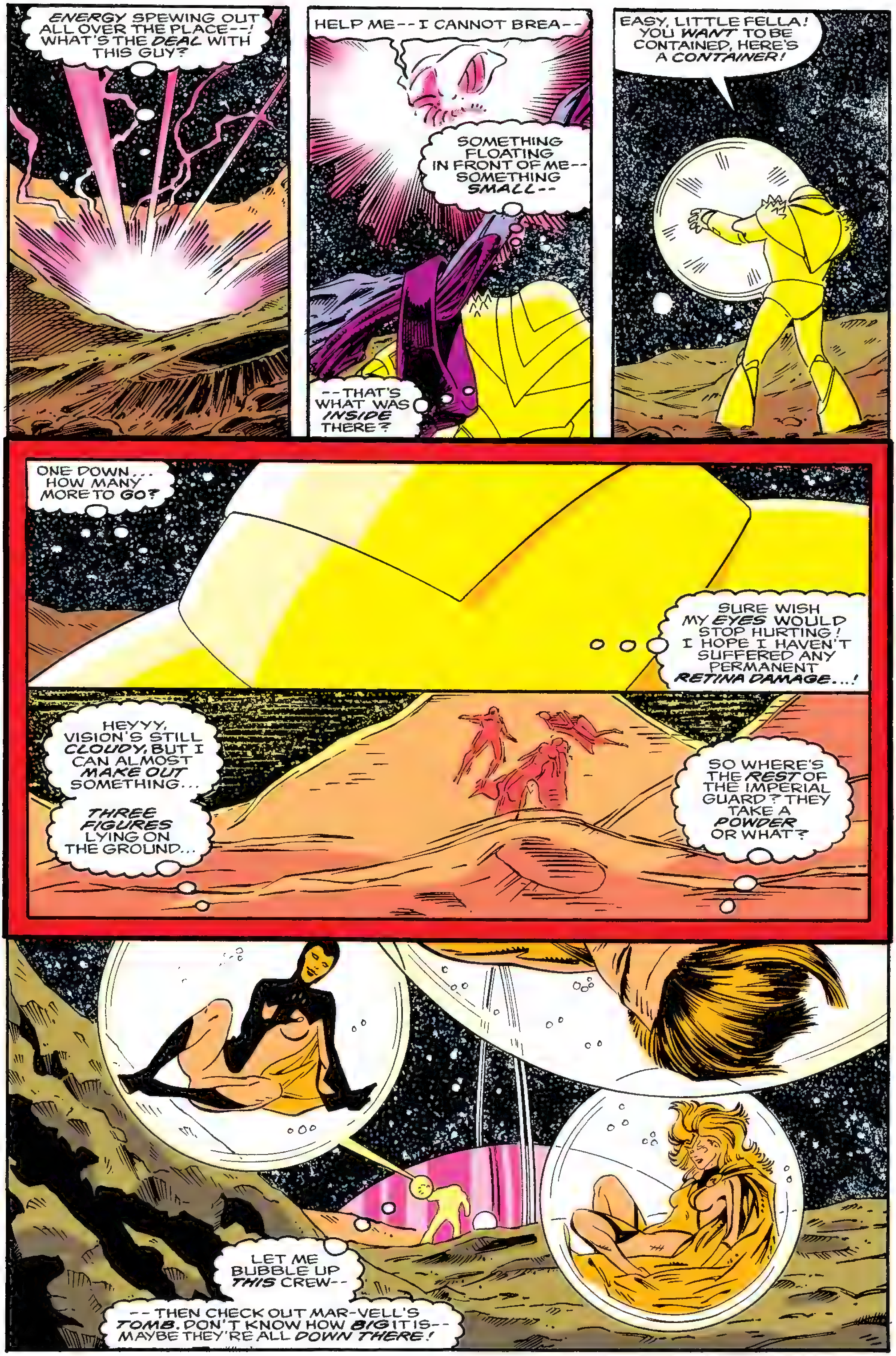

I CAN'T SEEM TO CONNECT WITH *ANY* OF THESE GUYS! DO *ALL* IMPERIAL GUARDSMEN HAVE THE POWER OF INTANGIBILITY?
ON THE OTHER HAND, BESIDES BATTERING IN MY DOME, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OF THEM *CONNECT* WITH ANY OF *US!*
ARE THESE GUYS INEFFECTUAL *PHANTOMS*-- OR ARE THEY JUST *ILLUSIONS* OF SOME--
AAAH!
MY EYES--!
I--I CAN'T SEE!
OR IS THIS *ANOTHER* ILLUSION?

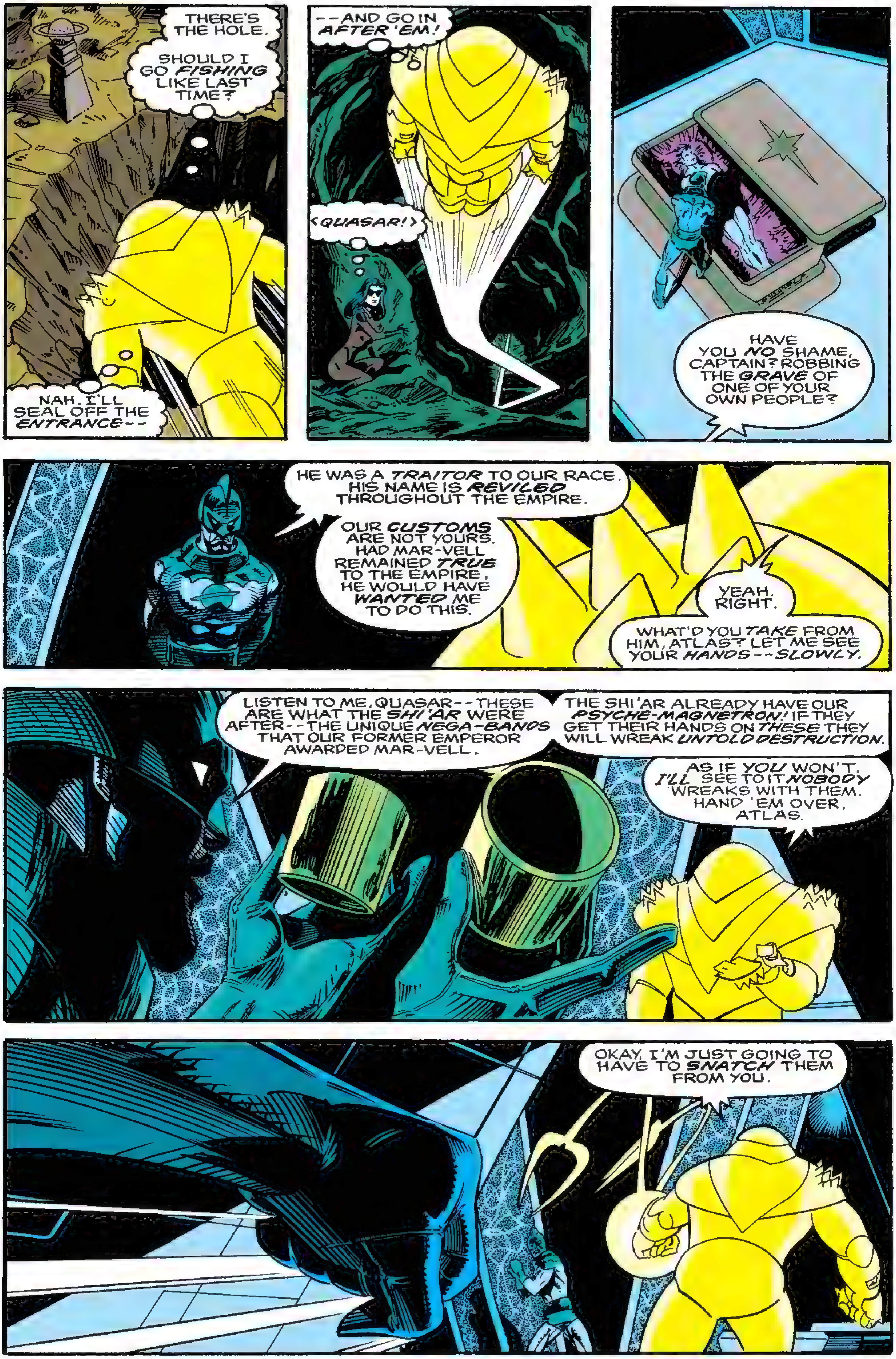

DOESN'T MATTER! EITHER WAY I'M *BLIND*. THIS CALLS FOR STATE-OF-THE-ART *QUANTUM ARMOR*
QUASAR--?
HOPE I DON'T LOOK *TOO* STUPID.
I'LL JUST HAVE TO LET MY Q-BANDS DO THE "*SEEING*" FOR ME!
WEIRD! ALL THESE SUPER-ALIENS AROUND AND I PICK UP ENERGY *EMANATIONS* FROM BUT ONE--TWO--*THREE* OF THEM!
CAN THE REST OF THEM *CLOAK* THEIR ENERGIES OR ARE THEY REALLY EVEN *THERE*?
DARE NOT LET LOOSE WITH INDISCRIMINATE *BLASTS*--A RICOCHET MIGHT HIT *STARFOX*! NO CHOICE BUT TO TRY GETTING *PHYSICAL* AGAIN!
<MY IMPULSE-BURSTS ARE--*NNN!*--NOT PENETRATING HIS *ARMAMENT*!>
AHHH! CONTACT! *THIS ONE'S* REALLY HERE AT LEAST!
AND HE'S BY FAR THE MOST *ENERGETIC* OF THE LOT!

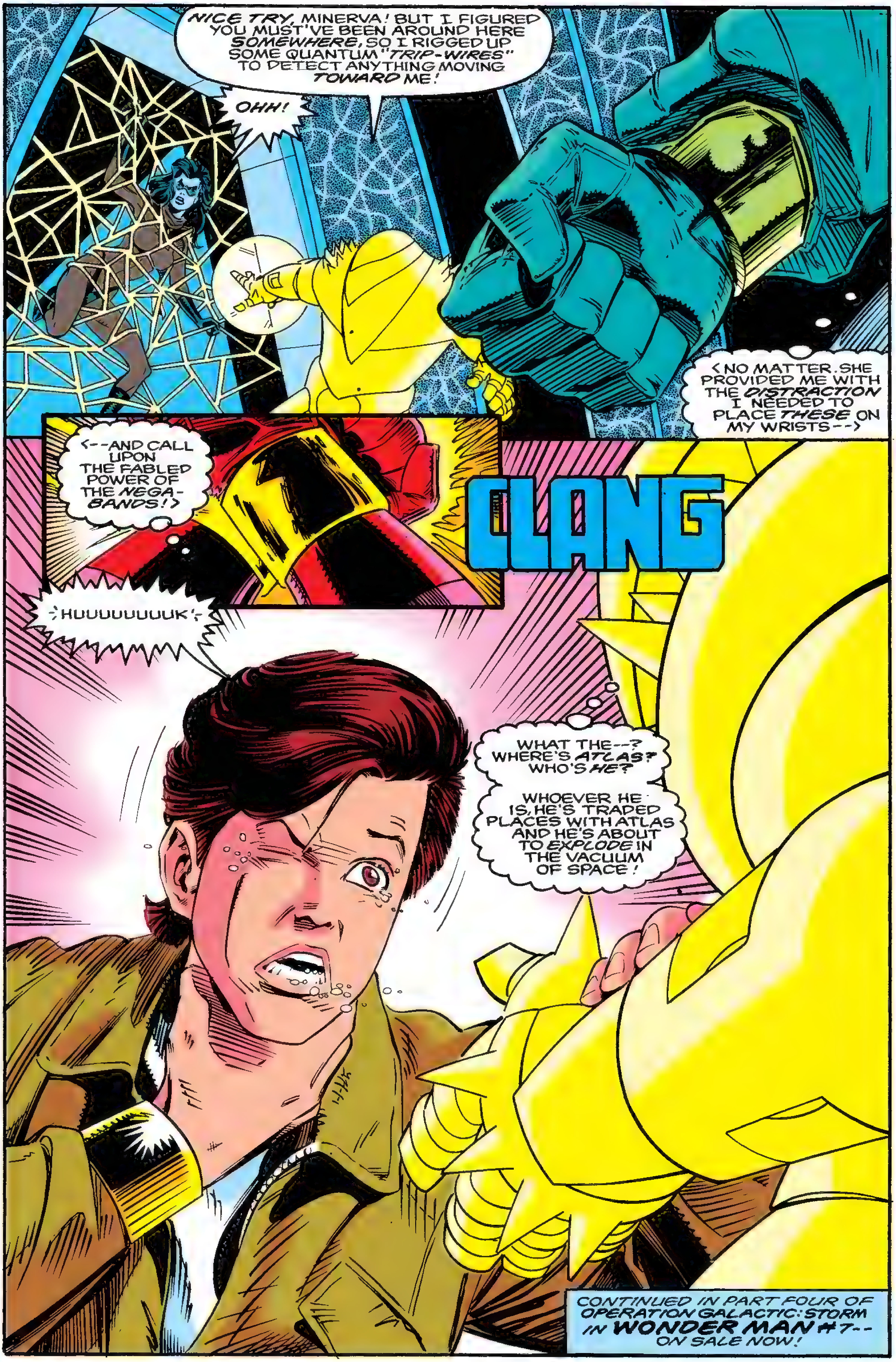

MANTA-- LOOK OUT!
FINALLY! SOMEONE WHO CAN BE TOUCHED!
MAYBE I CAN BLISS HER OUT AS WELL!
<IN THE MELEE, I'VE NOT HAD TIME TO PAY HEED TO MY EXTRASENSORY IMPRESSIONS-->
<--AS TO WHERE THE TRUE SOURCES OF DANGER LIE!>
<NO MORE!>
HEY! CAN I INTEREST ANY OF THE REST OF YOU IN THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE?
<HERE.>
<THOUGH I CANNOT SEE ANYTHING-->
NGH
<--THE SOURCE OF DANGER IS HERE!>
WHAT IN THE NAME OF KRONOS? THE SHI'AR HAVE ALL DISAPPEARED!
ALMOST ALL, AT ANY RATE!
THE WOMAN I BLISSED OUT IS STILL THERE-- AS IS QUASAR'S SPARRING PARTNER!


MINERVA...?
APPARENTLY THIS WOMAN CAN PROJECT MULTIPLE THREE-DIMENSIONAL *ILLUSIONS*. WHEN *CONSCIOUS*, THAT IS.
YOU *KNOW* SOMETHING, MINERVA, FOR AN *OPPONENT*--
--YOU'RE O--HHHH!
<NOW TO HELP *ATT-LAS!*>
MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER GALAXY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TEN THOUSAND WORLD KREE EMPIRE...
<THE EMPIRE IS *DECAYING*.>
<AND I SHOULD SIMPLY SIT BACK AND LET IT *HAPPEN*. IT WOULD SERVE THOSE *TWO IDIOTS* WHO USURPED THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP FROM THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE RIGHT!
<THE EXALTED ONE WOULD *NEVER* HAVE DISMISSED SO MANY OF US SCIENTISTS! INABILITY TO MEET THE *QUOTA*, INDEED!>
<DID THEY EVEN EXAMINE MY *PAST RECORD?* WERE THEY NOT AWARE OF MY *ACHIEVEMENTS?*>
<BY TAMBOR, I WAS THE CHIEF ARCHITECT OF THE *PURSUER* PROJECT--WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN THE NEXT GENERATION IN *CYBER-GENETIC ENGINEERING!*>
<TOO MANY *BUGS* TO WORK OUT BEFORE IT CAN BE COST EFFECTIVE, THEY SAID. THERE ARE MORE *PROMISING* CYBERTECHNIC PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT, THEY SAID.
<*BAH!* SHORT-SIGHTED KNOW-NOTHINGS! I'LL *SHOW* THEM!>

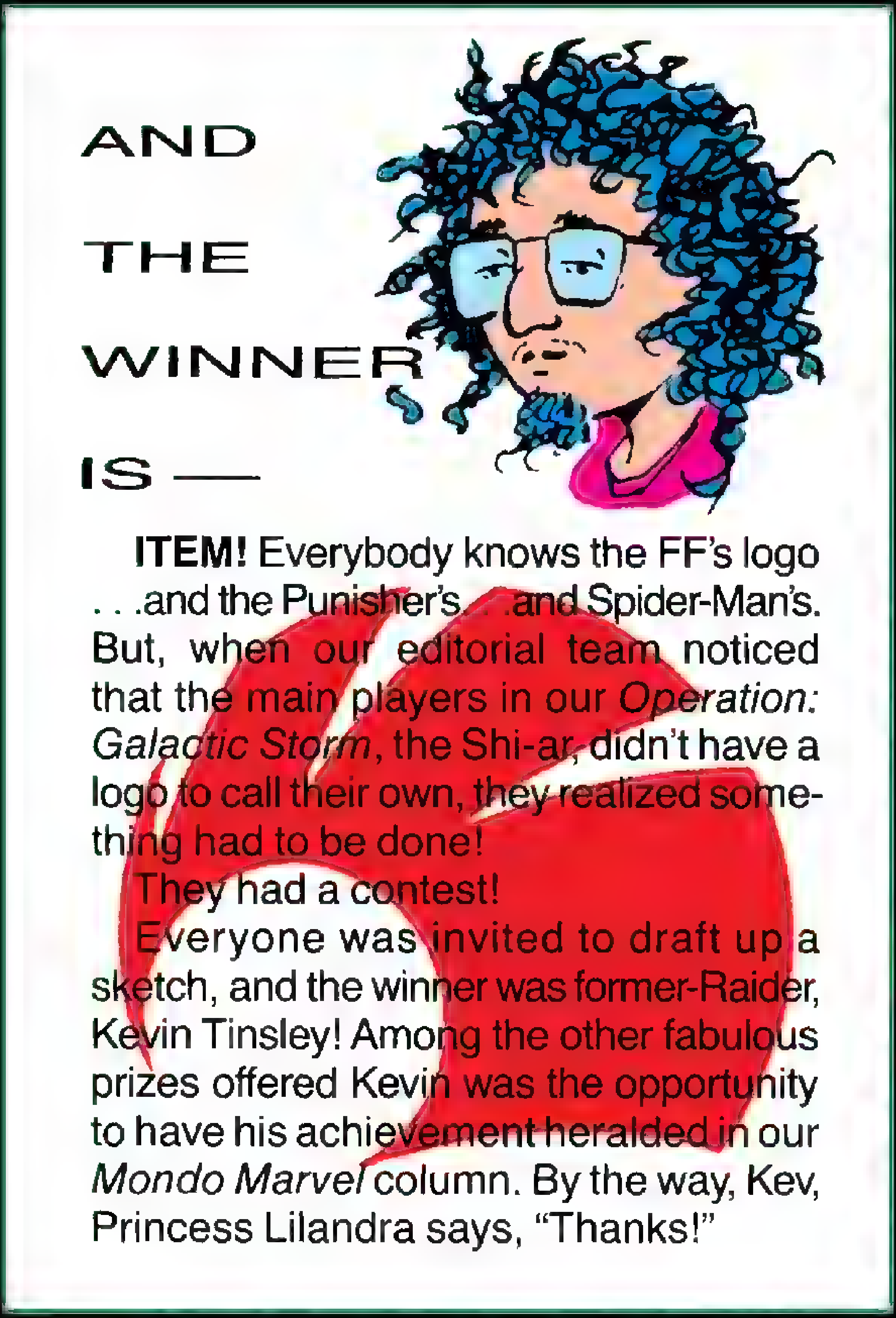

<ASSIGN ME TO THIS BACKWATER FACTORY-WORLD, WILL THEY? MAKE ME FOREMAN OF A MUNITIONS MANUFACTURING PLANT!>
<INSULTING... AND STUPID.>
<FOR I TOOK THE PURSUER TECHNOLOGY WITH ME AND CONVERTED SOME OF THESE FACILITIES TO ACCOMMODATE IT.>
<IF THEY DON'T WANT ME TO DEVELOP CYBER-GENETIC WARRIORS FOR THE MILITIA--SO BE IT. BUT I HAVE DEVELOPED THEM NONETHELESS!>
<AND I MYSELF SHALL BE THE SOLE BENEFACTOR OF MY GENIUS.>
<IT IS ACCOMPLISHED. I HAVE BEEN IMPRINTED. THE PROCESS WORKS AS I KNEW IT WOULD.>
<IT IS CYBER-GENETICIST KORATH-THAK YOU HAVE BANISHED, USURPERS--BUT IT IS KORATH THE PURSUER WHO SHALL RETURN TO SHAKE THIS EMPIRE TO ITS FOUNDATIONS!>
WHILE BACK AT MAR-VELL'S TOMB...
NO--DON'T--!
YOU'VE BREACHED MY CONTAINMENT SUIT!
I'M... DISPERSING.
WHAT--?


ENERGY SPEWING OUT ALL OVER THE PLACE--! WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THIS GUY?
HELP ME--I CANNOT BREA--
SOMETHING FLOATING IN FRONT OF ME--SOMETHING SMALL--
--THAT'S WHAT WAS INSIDE THERE?
EASY, LITTLE FELLA! YOU WANT TO BE CONTAINED, HERE'S A CONTAINER!
ONE DOWN... HOW MANY MORE TO GO?
SURE WISH MY EYES WOULD STOP HURTING! I HOPE I HAVEN'T SUFFERED ANY PERMANENT RETINA DAMAGE...!
HEYYY, VISION'S STILL CLOUDY, BUT I CAN ALMOST MAKE OUT SOMETHING...
THREE FIGURES LYING ON THE GROUND...
SO WHERE'S THE REST OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD? THEY TAKE A POWDER OR WHAT?
LET ME BUBBLE UP THIS CREW--
--THEN CHECK OUT MAR-VELL'S TOMB. DON'T KNOW HOW BIG IT IS--MAYBE THEY'RE ALL DOWN THERE!


THERE'S THE HOLE.
SHOULD I GO *FISHING* LIKE LAST TIME?
NAH. I'LL SEAL OFF THE *ENTRANCE*--
--AND GO IN *AFTER* 'EM!
<QUASAR!>
HAVE YOU *NO* SHAME, CAPTAIN? ROBBING THE *GRAVE* OF ONE OF YOUR OWN PEOPLE?
HE WAS A *TRAITOR* TO OUR RACE. HIS NAME IS *REVILED* THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE.
OUR *CUSTOMS* ARE NOT YOURS. HAD MAR-VELL REMAINED *TRUE* TO THE EMPIRE, HE WOULD HAVE *WANTED* ME TO DO THIS.
YEAH. RIGHT.
WHAT'D YOU *TAKE* FROM HIM, ATLAS? LET ME SEE YOUR *HANDS*--*SLOWLY*.
LISTEN TO ME, QUASAR--THESE ARE WHAT THE *SHI'AR* WERE AFTER--THE UNIQUE *NEGA-BANDS* THAT OUR FORMER EMPEROR AWARDED MAR-VELL.
THE SHI'AR ALREADY HAVE OUR *PSYCHE-MAGNETRON!* IF THEY GET THEIR HANDS ON *THESE* THEY WILL WREAK *UNTOLD DESTRUCTION*.
AS IF *YOU* WON'T. *I'LL* SEE TO IT *NOBODY* WREAKS WITH THEM. HAND 'EM OVER, ATLAS.
OKAY. I'M JUST GOING TO HAVE TO *SNATCH* THEM FROM YOU.


NICE TRY, MINERVA! BUT I FIGURED YOU MUST'VE BEEN AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE, SO I RIGGED UP SOME QUANTUM "TRIP-WIRES" TO DETECT ANYTHING MOVING TOWARD ME!
OHH!
<NO MATTER. SHE PROVIDED ME WITH THE DISTRACTION I NEEDED TO PLACE THESE ON MY WRISTS-->
<--AND CALL UPON THE FABLED POWER OF THE NEGA-BANDS!>
CLANG
HUUUUUUUUK
WHAT THE--? WHERE'S ATLAS? WHO'S HE?
WHOEVER HE IS, HE'S TRADED PLACES WITH ATLAS AND HE'S ABOUT TO EXPLODE IN THE VACUUM OF SPACE!

CONTINUED IN PART FOUR OF OPERATION GALACTIC STORM IN WONDER MAN #7-- ON SALE NOW!



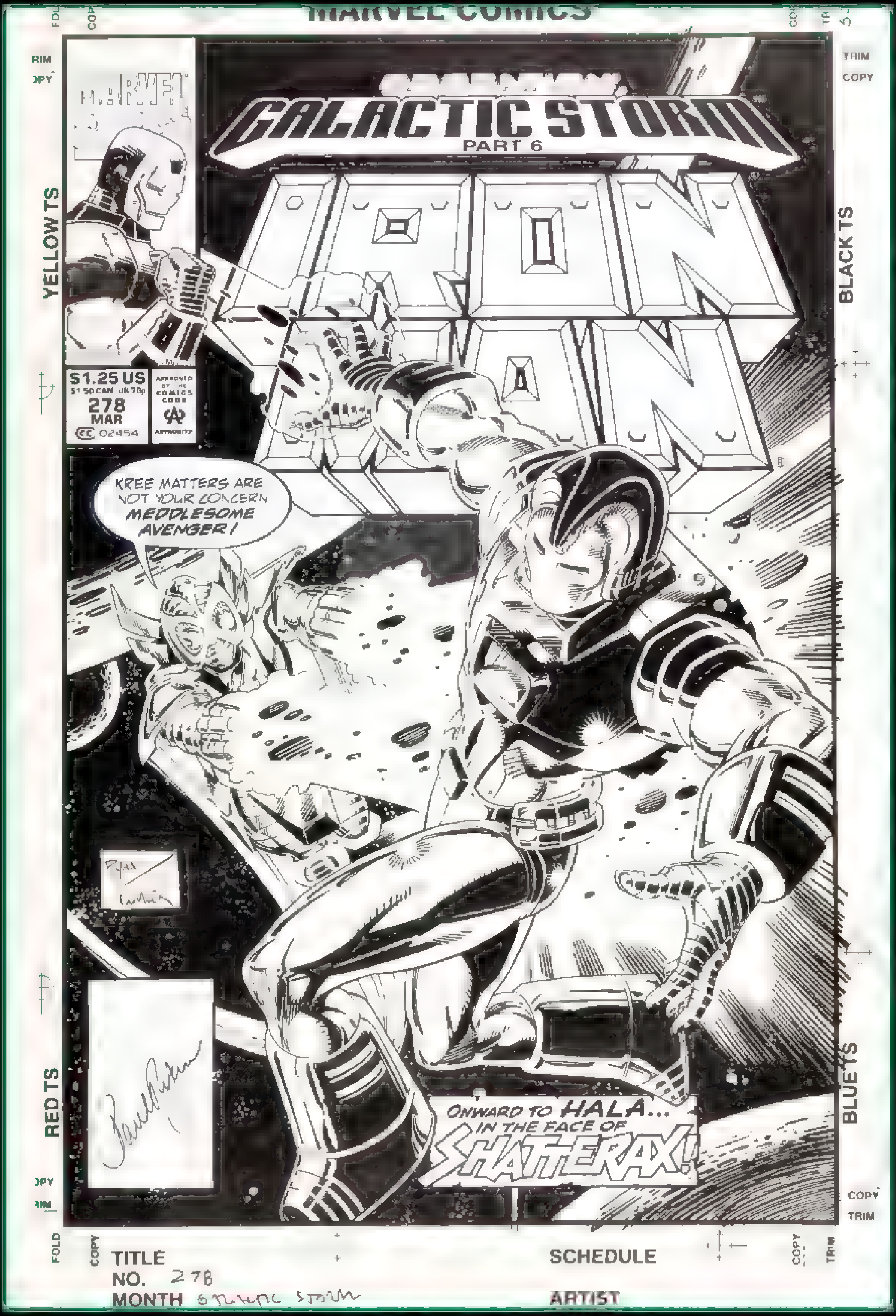
AND THE WINNER IS —

ITEM! Everybody knows the FF's logo . . .and the Punisher's. . .and Spider-Man's. But, when our editorial team noticed that the main players in our *Operation: Galactic Storm*, the Shi-ar, didn't have a logo to call their own, they realized something had to be done!

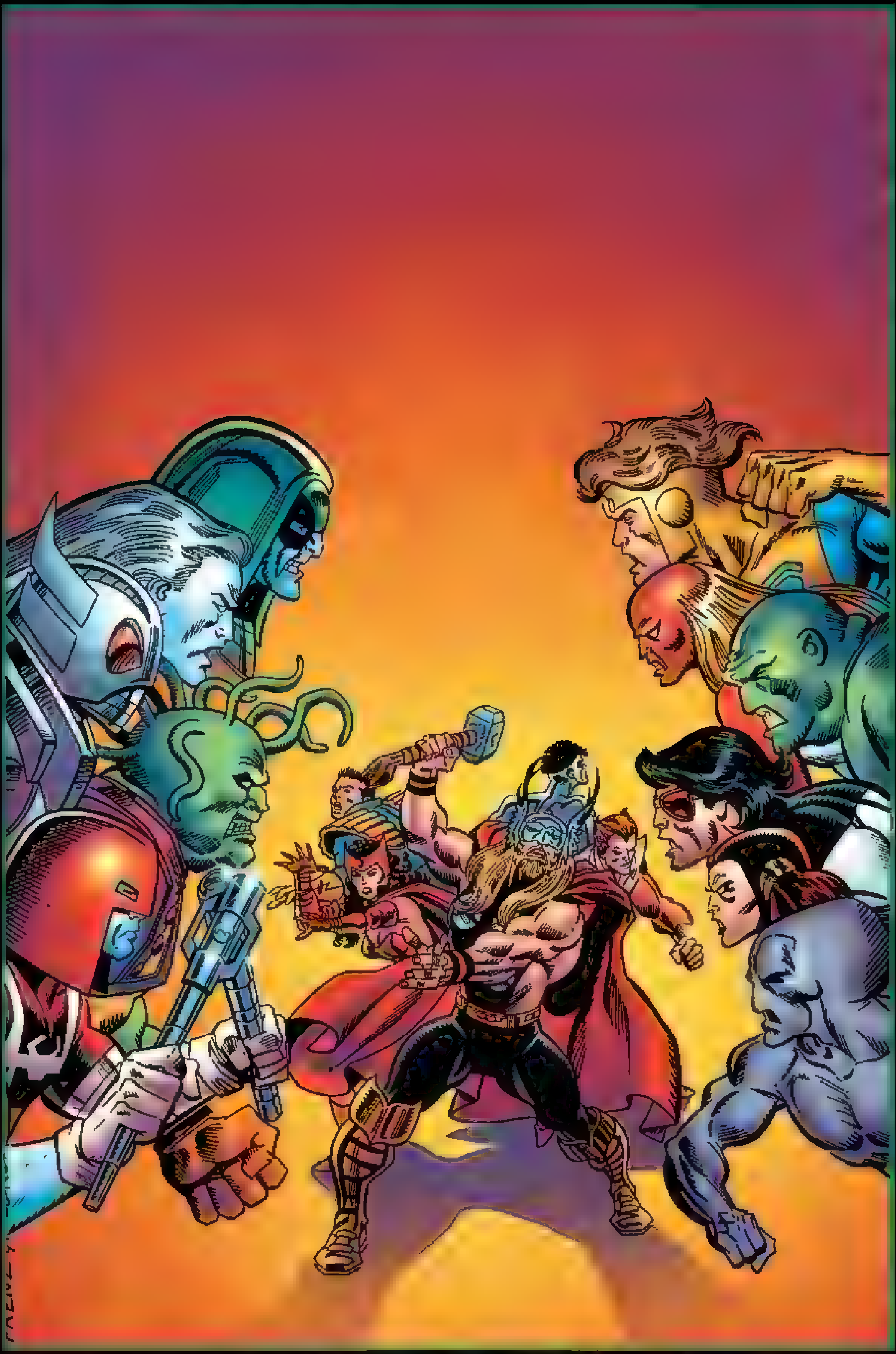
They had a contest!

Everyone was invited to draft up a sketch, and the winner was former-Raider, Kevin Tinsley! Among the other fabulous prizes offered Kevin was the opportunity to have his achievement heralded in our *Mondo Marvel* column. By the way, Kev, Princess Lilandra says, "Thanks!"

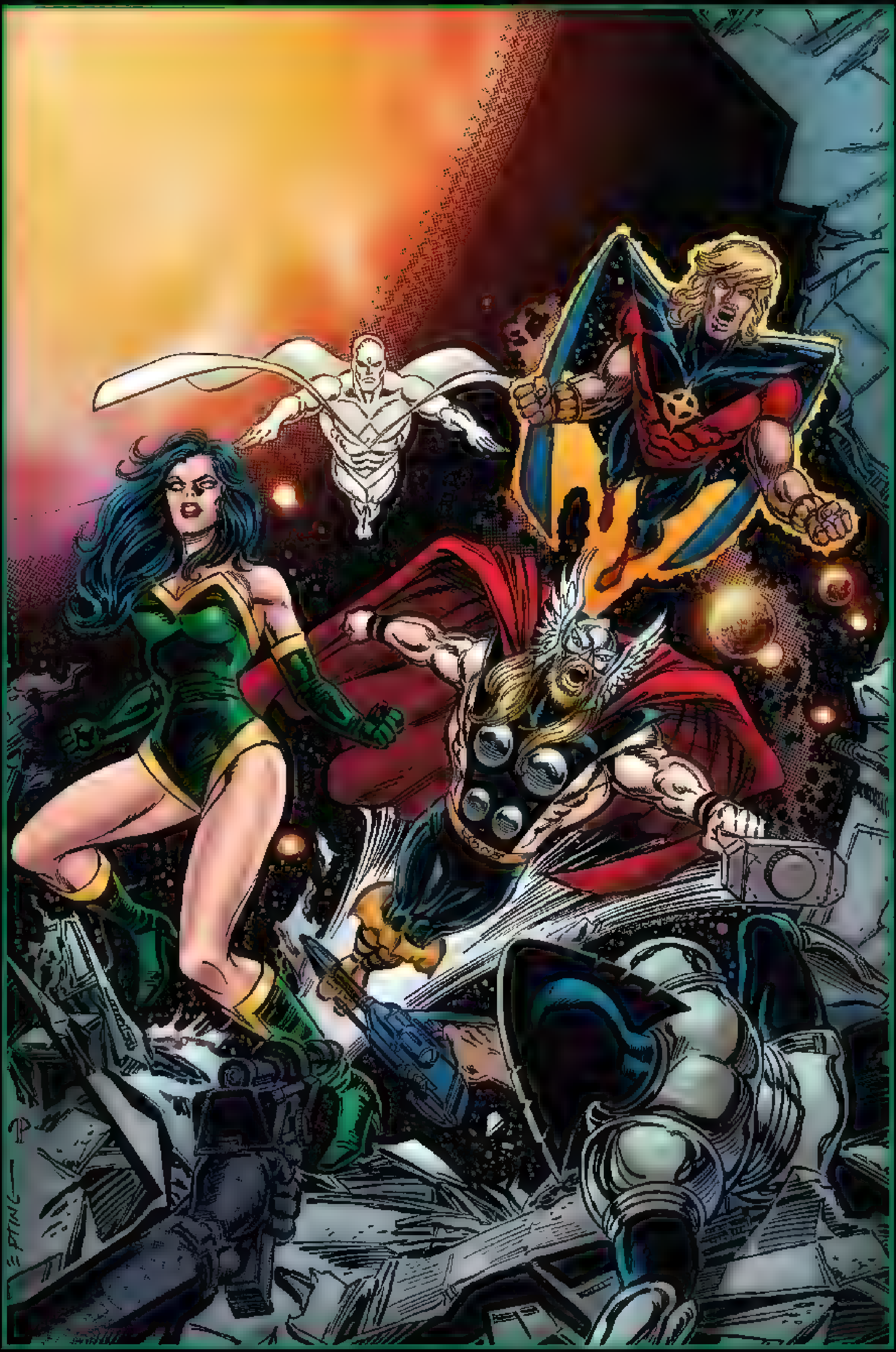
MARVEL AGE #110 ARTICLE BY MIKE LACKEY


MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 6
IRON MAN
$1.25 US
278
MAR
KREE MATTERS ARE NOT YOUR CONCERN MEDDLESOME AVENGER!
ONWARD TO HALA... IN THE FACE OF SHATTERAX!
YELLOW TS
BLACK TS
RED TS
BLUE TS
TITLE
NO. 278
MONTH
SCHEDULE
ARTIST

IRON MAN #278 COVER
ART BY PAUL RYAN & BOB WIACEK
COURTESY OF HERITAGEAUCTIONS.COM



AVENGERS: OPERATION GALACTIC STORM VOL. 2 TPB
COVER ART BY RON FRENZ, AL MILGROM
& AVALON'S MATT MILLA



MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 4
WONDER MAN
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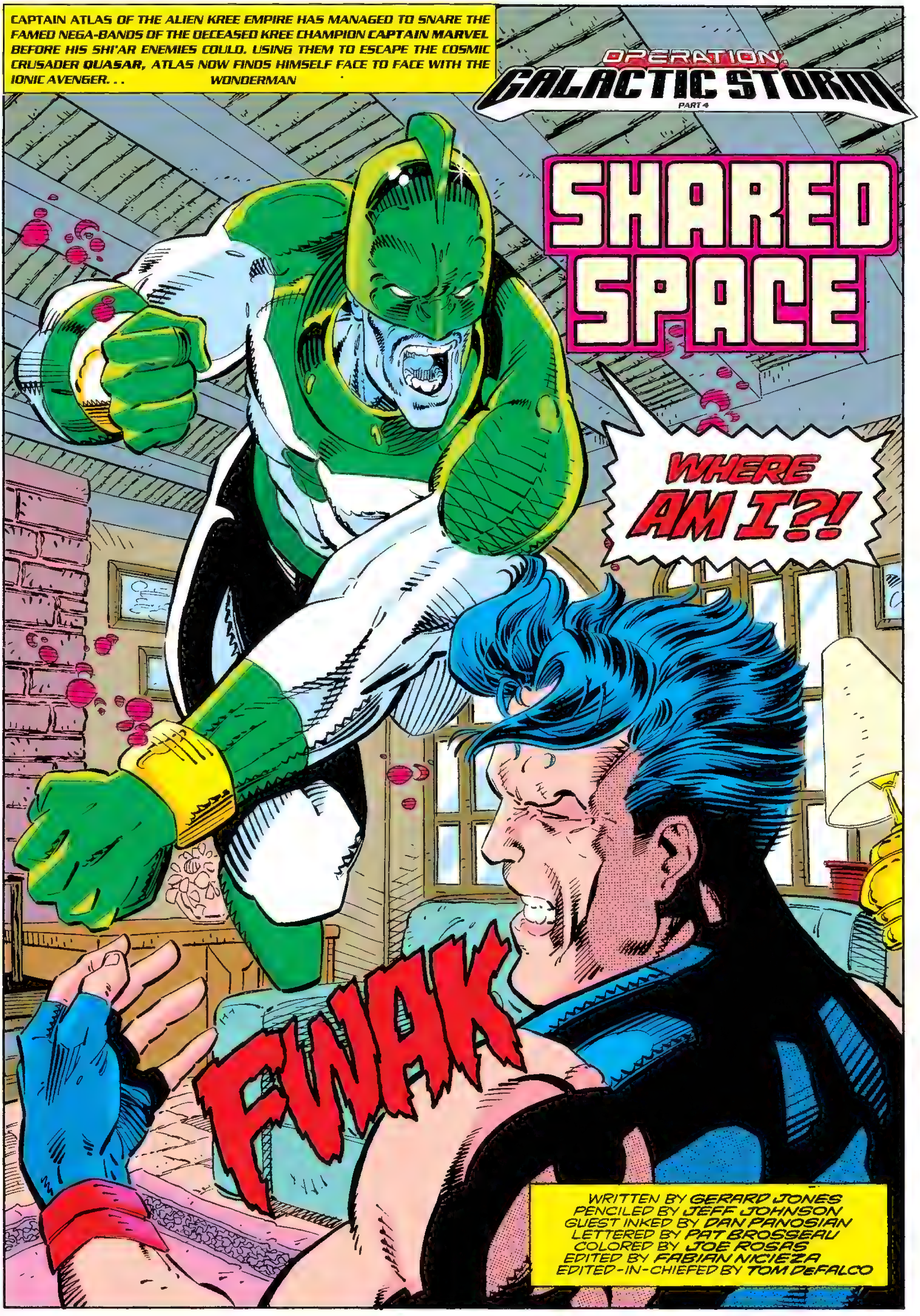
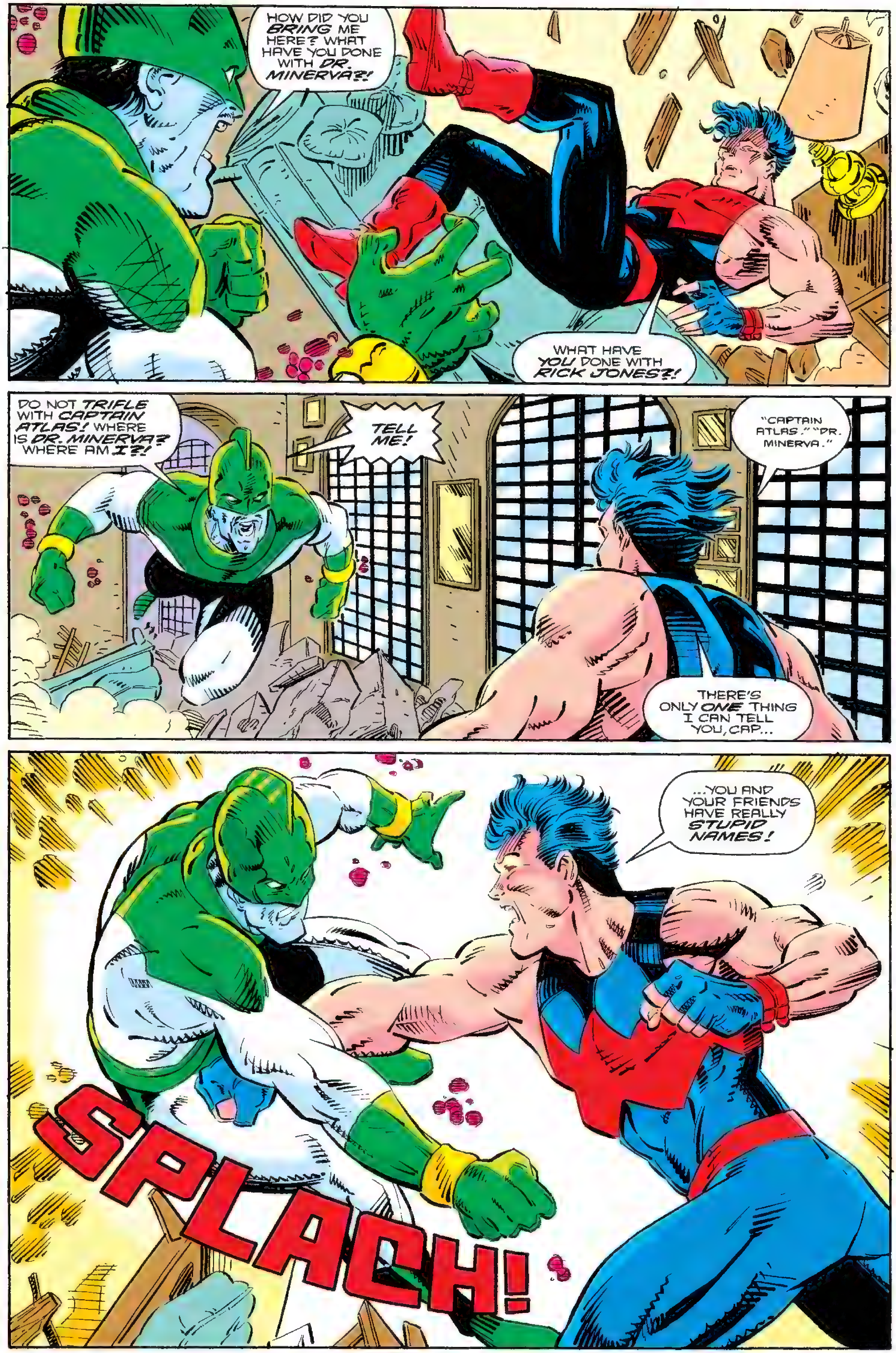
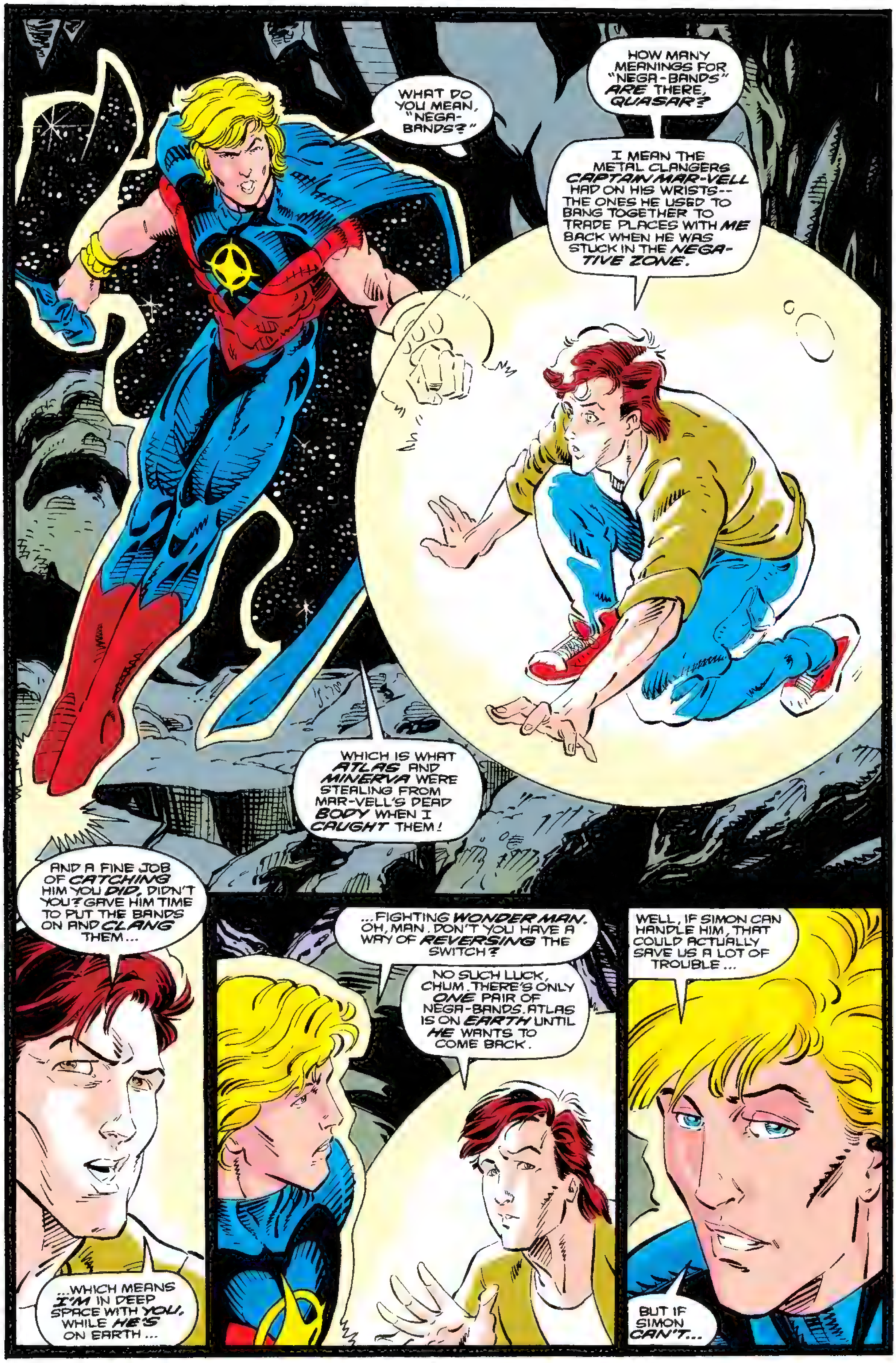
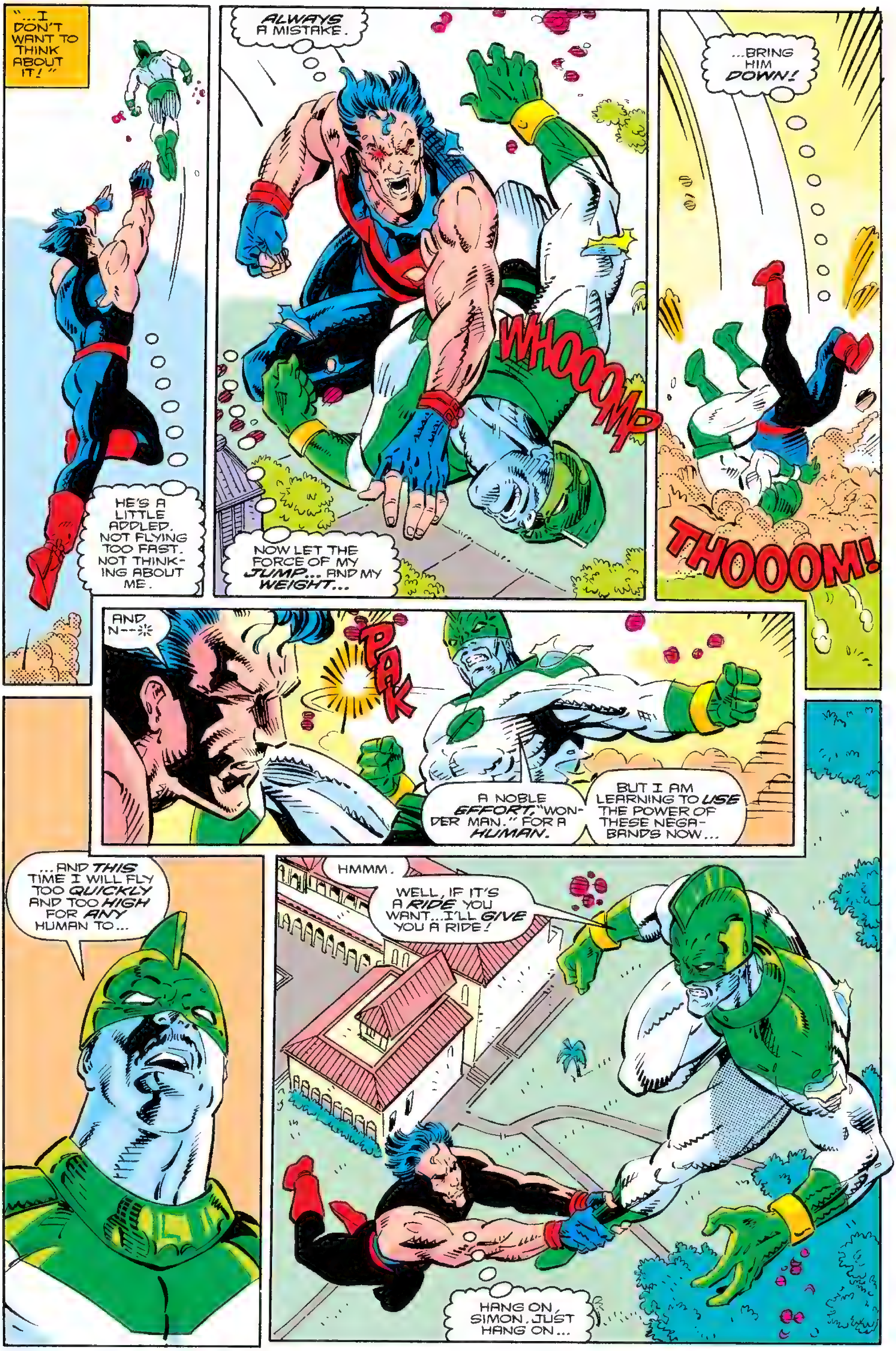
7
MAR
01767
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MY NAME'S RICK JONES-SUPER HERO SIDEKICK, MUSICIAN, PAWN IN AN INTERGALACTIC WAR...
...TOUGH LIFE, RIGHT?
S-KREE-M!
JOHNSON & austin 2

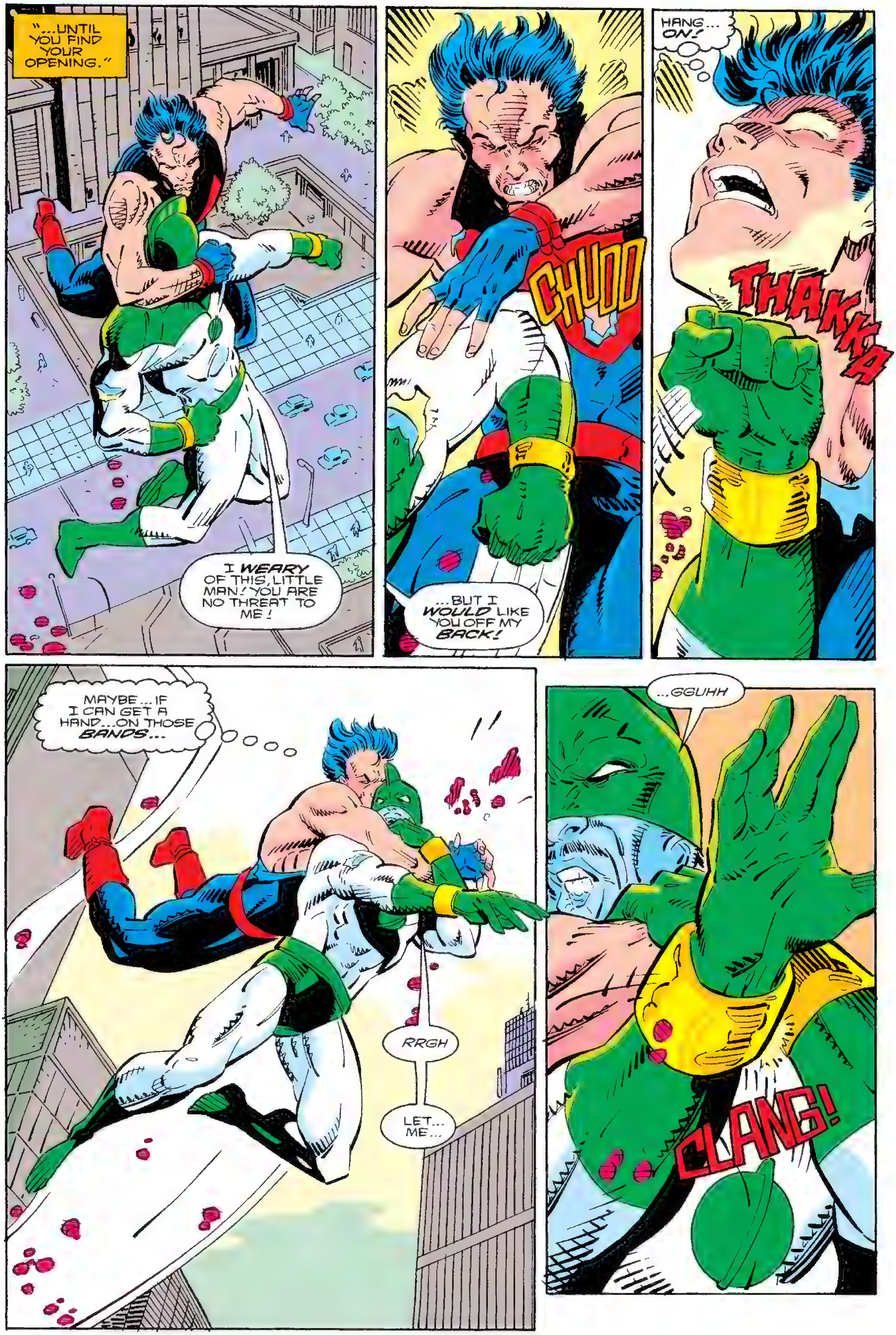

CAPTAIN ATLAS OF THE ALIEN KREE EMPIRE HAS MANAGED TO SNARE THE FAMED NEGA-BANDS OF THE DECEASED KREE CHAMPION CAPTAIN MARVEL BEFORE HIS SHI'AR ENEMIES COULD. USING THEM TO ESCAPE THE COSMIC CRUSADER QUASAR, ATLAS NOW FINDS HIMSELF FACE TO FACE WITH THE IONIC AVENGER. . . WONDERMAN
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 4
SHARED SPACE
WHERE AM I?!
FWAK
WRITTEN BY GERARD JONES
PENCILED BY JEFF JOHNSON
GUEST INKED BY DAN PANOSIAN
LETTERED BY PAT BROSSEAU
COLORED BY JOE ROSAS
EDITED BY FABIAN NICIEZA
EDITED-IN-CHIEFED BY TOM DeFALCO


HOW DID YOU *BRING* ME HERE? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH *DR. MINERVA?!*
WHAT HAVE *YOU* DONE WITH *RICK JONES?!*
DO NOT *TRIFLE* WITH *CAPTAIN ATLAS!* WHERE IS *DR. MINERVA?* WHERE AM *I?!*
TELL ME!
"CAPTAIN ATLAS." "DR. MINERVA."
THERE'S ONLY *ONE* THING I CAN TELL YOU, CAP...
...YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS HAVE REALLY *STUPID NAMES!*
SPLACH!

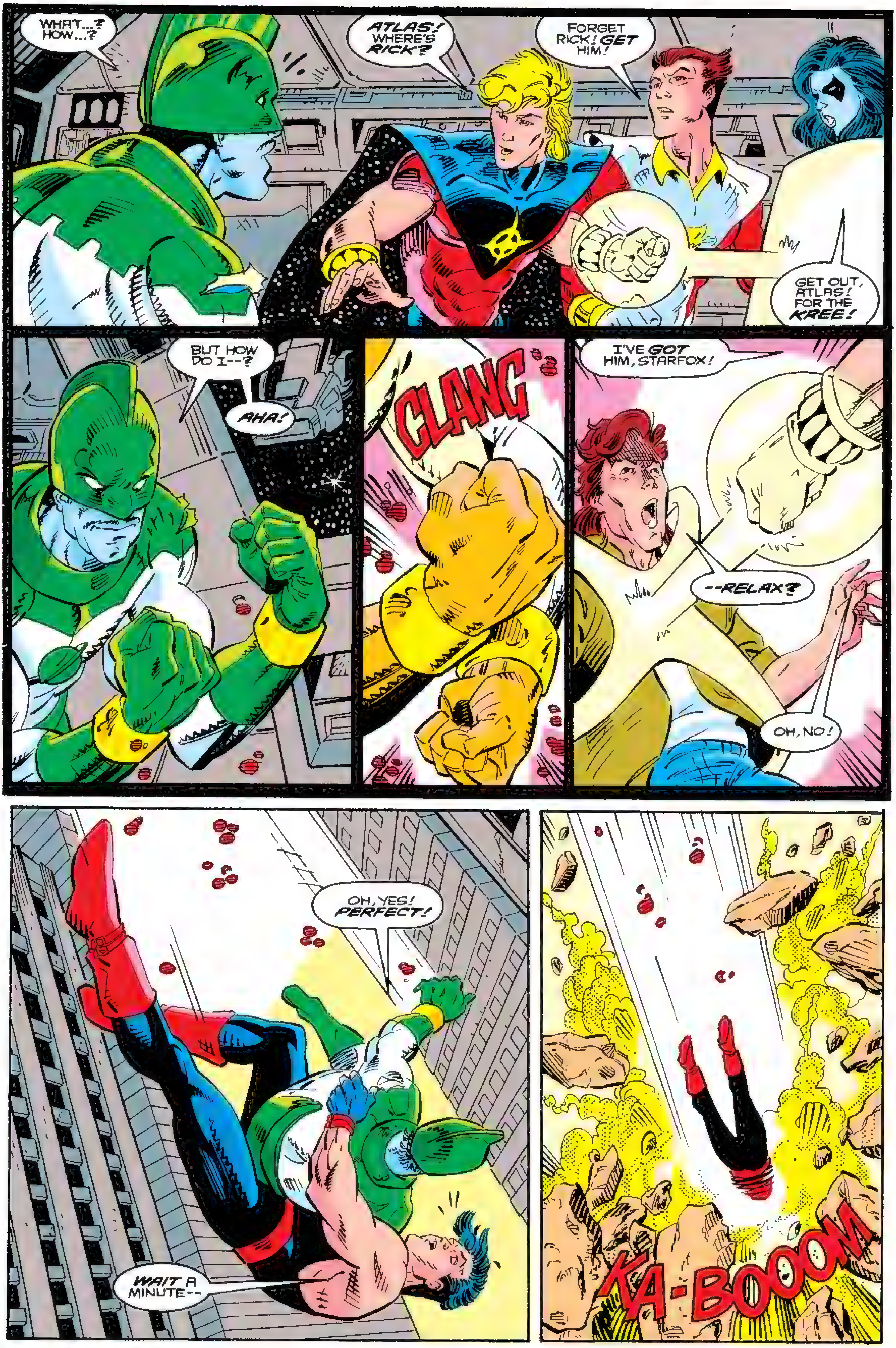
KUH-BWOOOM
DO NOT MOCK *US*, LITTLE MAN! DO NOT MOCK THE *KREE*!
THE *KREE*! OH, *LORDY*.
I BLEW *THIS* BODYGUARDING GIG *REAL* GOOD.
SOME KREE SOLDIERS TRIED TO KIDNAP RICK *ONCE* ALREADY--AS PART OF WHAT LOOKS LIKE A *SPACE-WAR* IN THE MAKING.*
ALL *I* HAD TO DO WAS KEEP RICK *SAFE*--BUT NOW *HE'S* SOMEHOW SWITCHED PLACES WITH A CRAZED KREE *SUPER-SOLDIER!*
WHERE *AM* I?! WHO *ARE* YOU?!
**SEE QUASAR #32.--FABIAN*
YOU REALLY DON'T *KNOW?* YOU'RE ON *EARTH!* AND AT THE MOMENT YOU'RE WRESTLING WITH--
--WOOOOFF!
EARTH!!
I HAVE NO BUSINESS ON THIS BACKWATER PLANET! I MUST FIND *DR. MINERVA*... AND BRING HIM THESE *NEGA-BANDS!*
I WAS GOING TO SAY, WONDER MAN!
"NEGA-BANDS"?

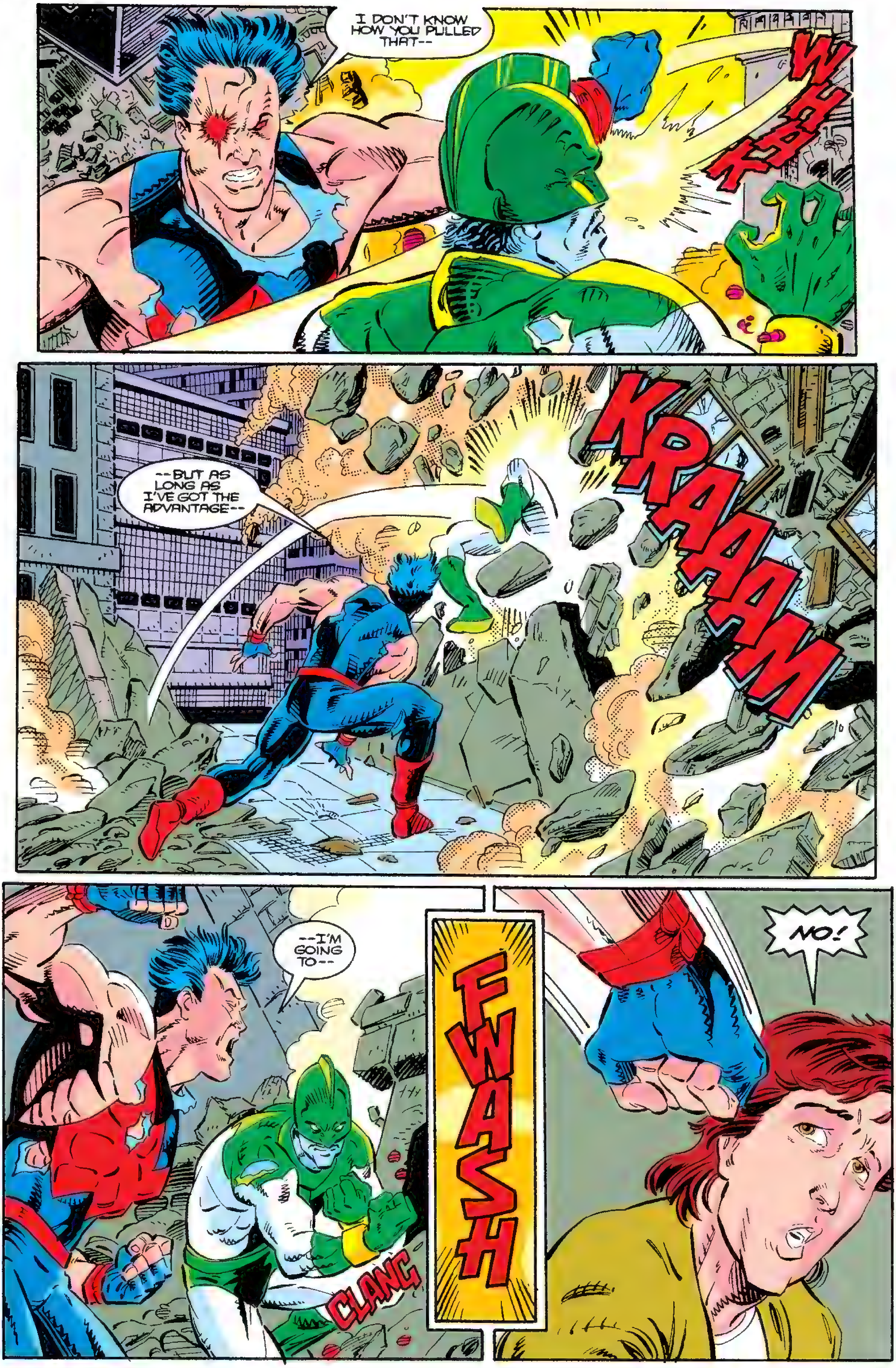

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "NEGA-BANDS?"
HOW MANY MEANINGS FOR "NEGA-BANDS" ARE THERE, QUASAR?
I MEAN THE METAL CLANGERS CAPTAIN MAR-VELL HAD ON HIS WRISTS-- THE ONES HE USED TO BANG TOGETHER TO TRADE PLACES WITH ME BACK WHEN HE WAS STUCK IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE.
WHICH IS WHAT ATLAS AND MINERVA WERE STEALING FROM MAR-VELL'S DEAD BODY WHEN I CAUGHT THEM!
AND A FINE JOB OF CATCHING HIM YOU DID, DIDN'T YOU? GAVE HIM TIME TO PUT THE BANDS ON AND CLANG THEM...
...WHICH MEANS I'M IN DEEP SPACE WITH YOU, WHILE HE'S ON EARTH...
...FIGHTING WONDER MAN. OH, MAN. DON'T YOU HAVE A WAY OF REVERSING THE SWITCH?
NO SUCH LUCK, CHUM. THERE'S ONLY ONE PAIR OF NEGA-BANDS. ATLAS IS ON EARTH UNTIL HE WANTS TO COME BACK.
WELL, IF SIMON CAN HANDLE HIM, THAT COULD ACTUALLY SAVE US A LOT OF TROUBLE...
BUT IF SIMON CAN'T...

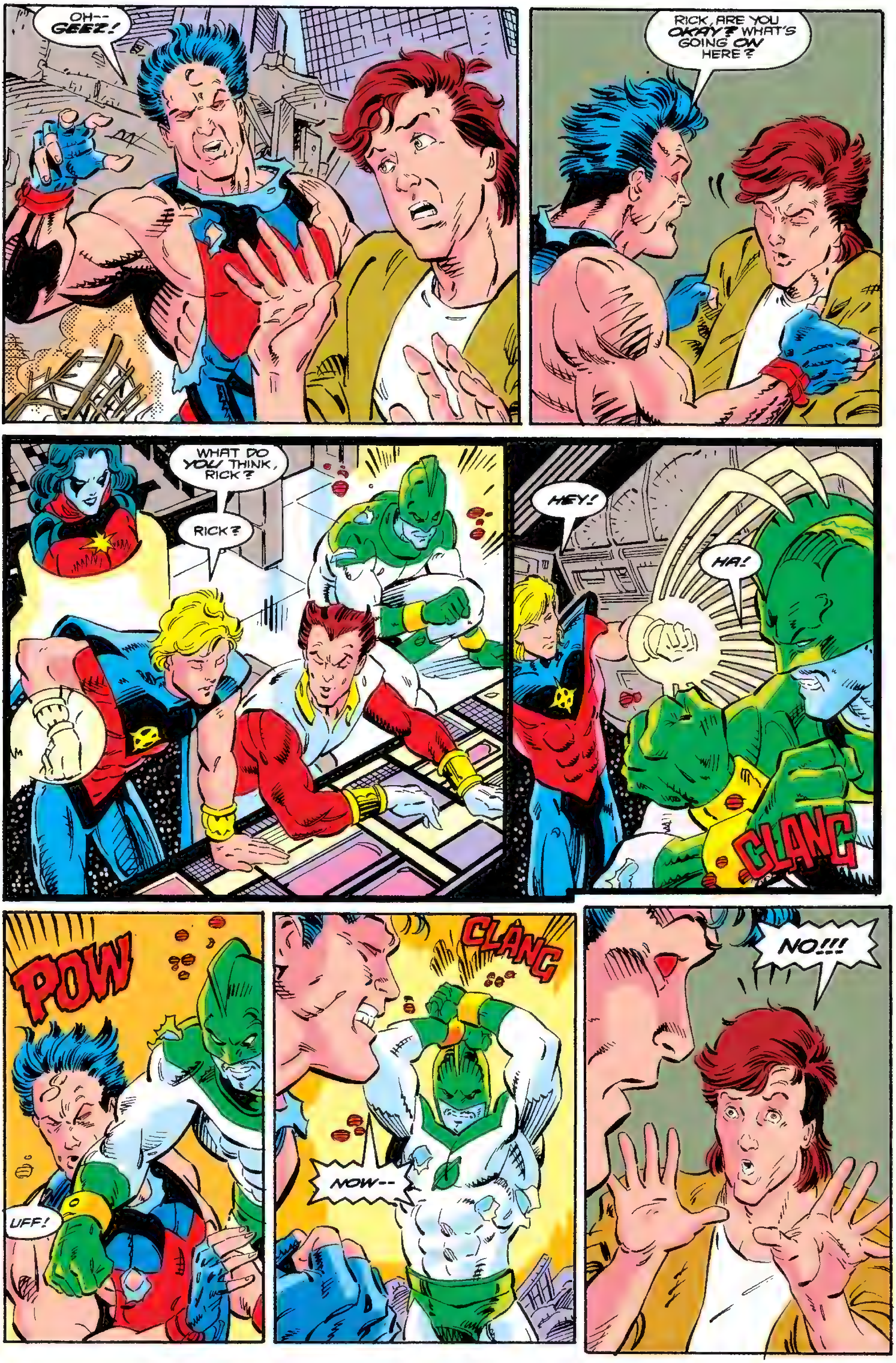

"...I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT!"
HE'S A LITTLE ADDLED. NOT FLYING TOO FAST. NOT THINKING ABOUT ME.
ALWAYS A MISTAKE.
NOW LET THE FORCE OF MY JUMP... AND MY WEIGHT...
WHOOOOMP
...BRING HIM DOWN!
THOOOM!
AND N--
PAK
A NOBLE EFFORT, "WONDER MAN." FOR A HUMAN.
BUT I AM LEARNING TO USE THE POWER OF THESE NEGA-BANDS NOW...
...AND THIS TIME I WILL FLY TOO QUICKLY AND TOO HIGH FOR ANY HUMAN TO...
HMMM.
WELL, IF IT'S A RIDE YOU WANT...I'LL GIVE YOU A RIDE!
HANG ON, SIMON. JUST HANG ON...

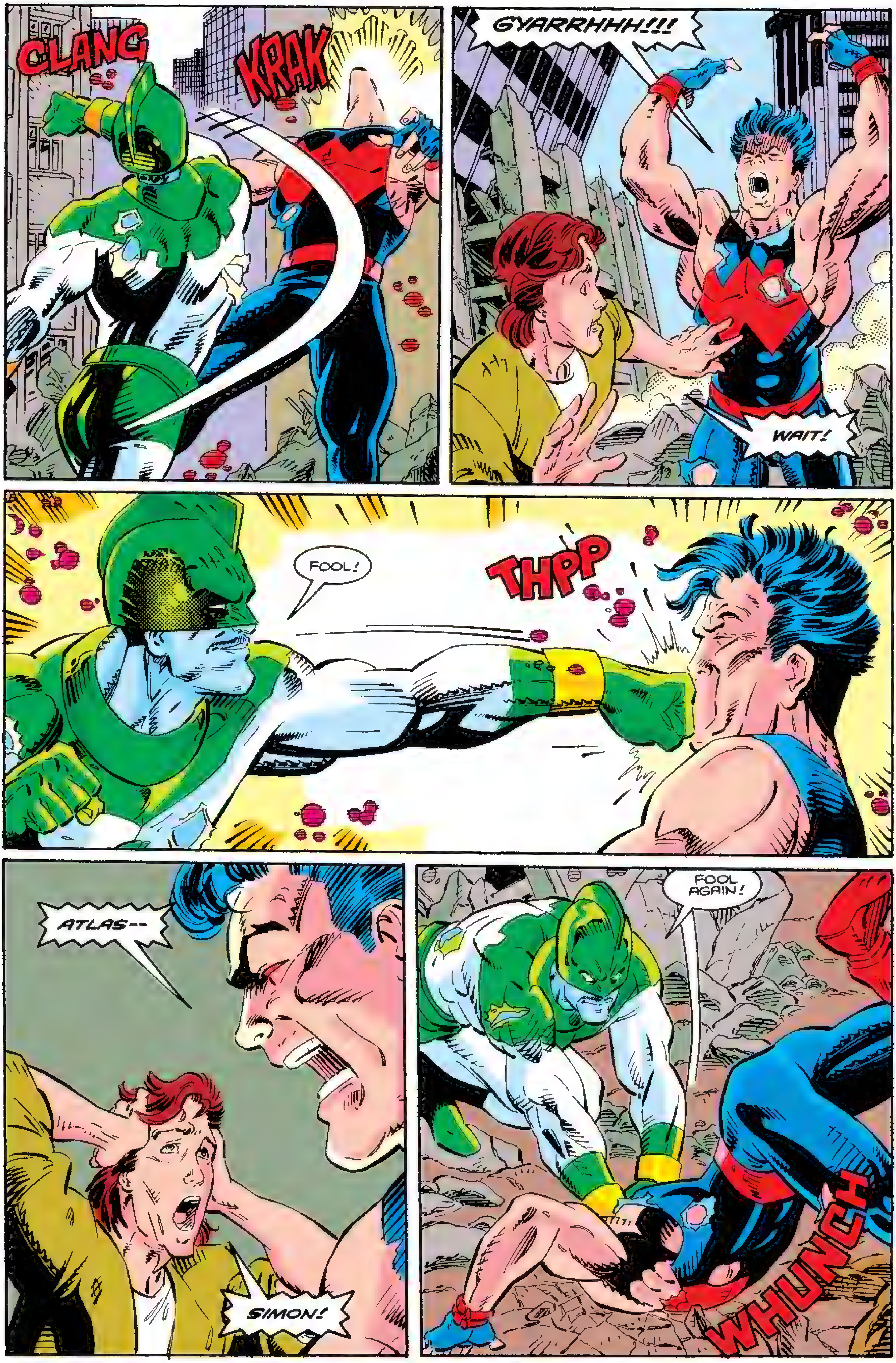

"...UNTIL YOU FIND YOUR OPENING."
I *WEARY* OF THIS, LITTLE MAN! YOU ARE NO THREAT TO ME!
CHUDD
...BUT I *WOULD* LIKE YOU OFF MY *BACK!*
HANG... *ON!*
THAKKA
MAYBE... IF I CAN GET A HAND... ON THOSE *BANDS...*
RRGH
LET... ME...
...GGUHH
CLANG!

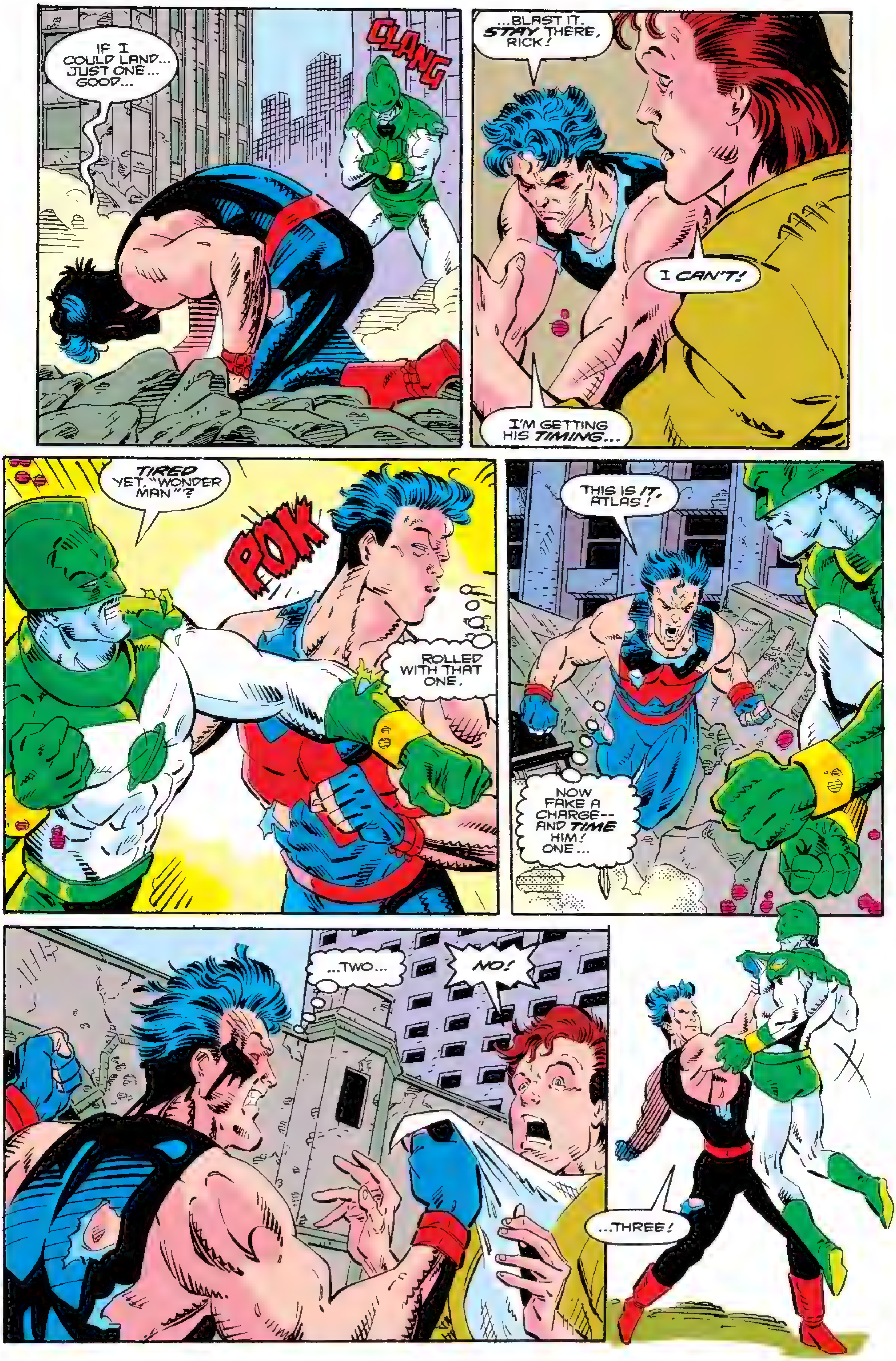
FWASH
WHAT THE...
...HECK?
WHERE'S *CAPTAIN ATLAS?*
ASK *QUASAR.* HE'S PROBABLY *REAL* HAPPY WITH YOU RIGHT NOW.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR "PROTECTION" FOR ONE...
OH, *NO!*
NO!!
JUST HOLD TIGHT-- LET ME GET MY BODY AROUND YOU TO TAKE THE IMPACT--
--AND *RELAX!*
"RELAX," HE SAYS! HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO--

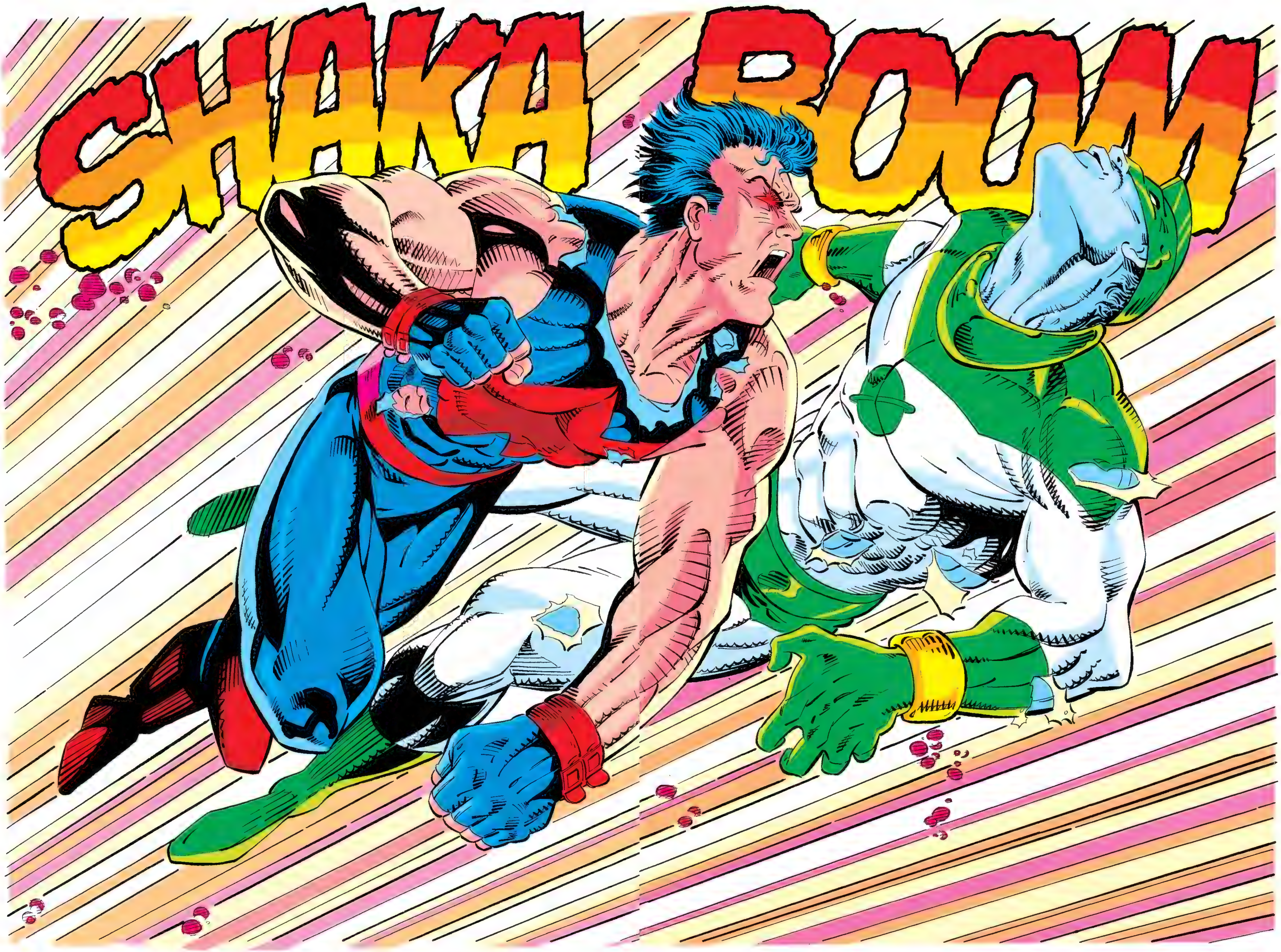

WHAT...? HOW...?
ATLAS! WHERE'S RICK?
FORGET RICK! GET HIM!
GET OUT, ATLAS! FOR THE KREE!
BUT HOW DO I--?
AHA!
CLANG
I'VE GOT HIM, STARFOX!
--RELAX?
OH, NO!
OH, YES! PERFECT!
WAIT A MINUTE--
KA-BOOOM

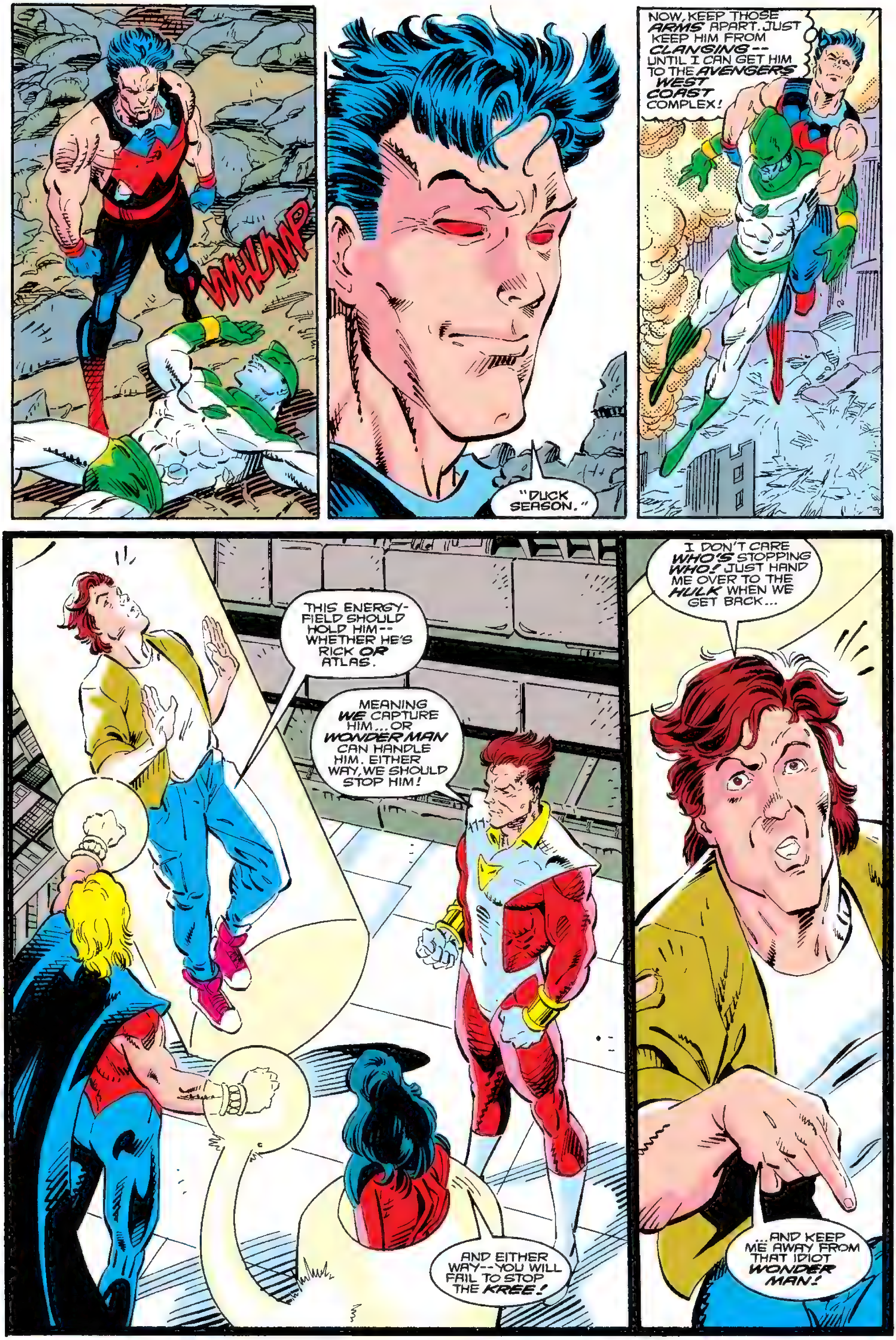

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU PULLED THAT--
WHAK
--BUT AS LONG AS I'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE--
KRAAAAM
--I'M GOING TO--
CLANG
FWASH
NO!

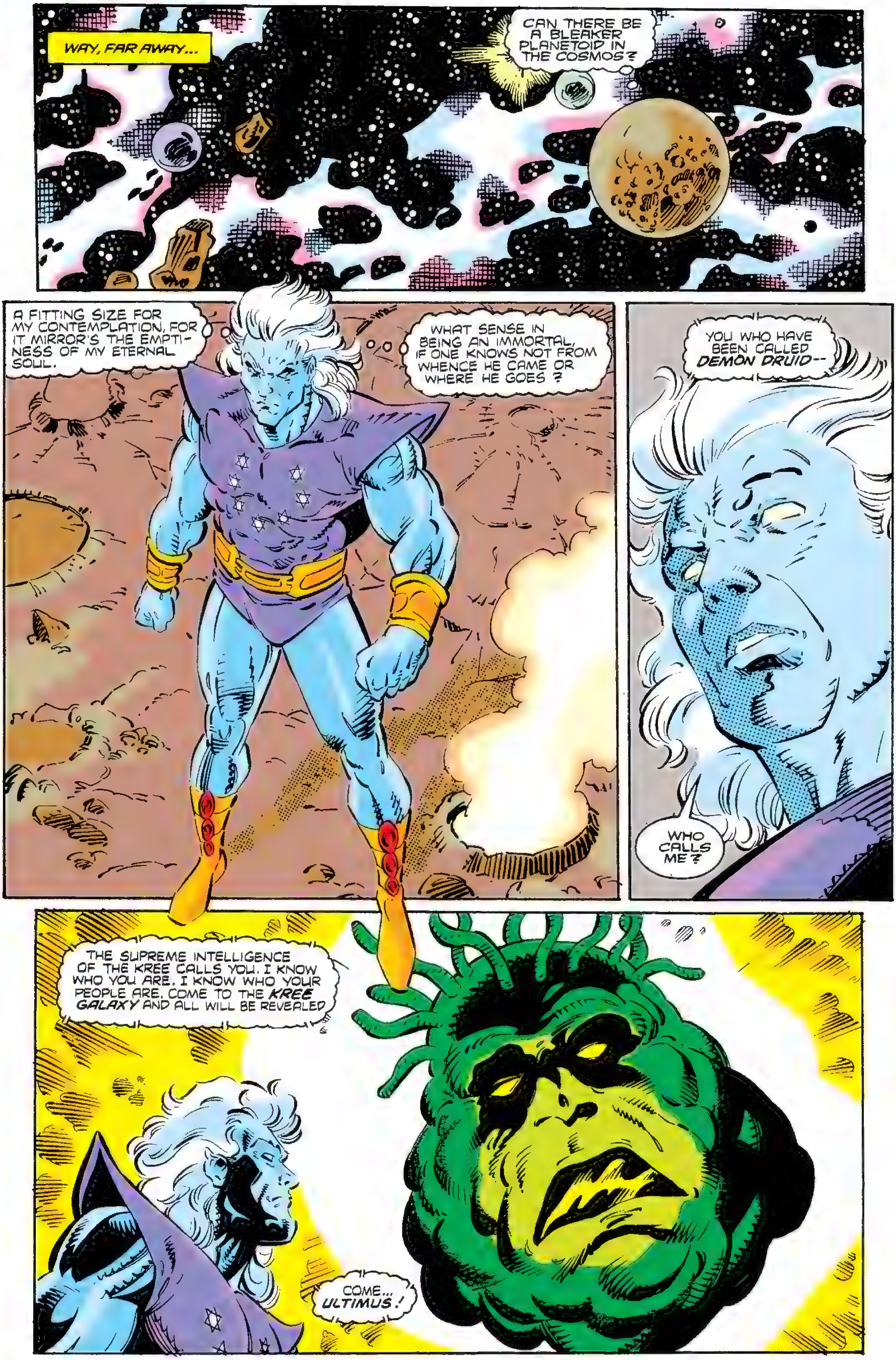

OH-- GEEZ!
RICK, ARE YOU OKAY? WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, RICK?
RICK?
HEY!
HA!
CLANG
POW
UFF!
CLANG
NOW--
NO!!!

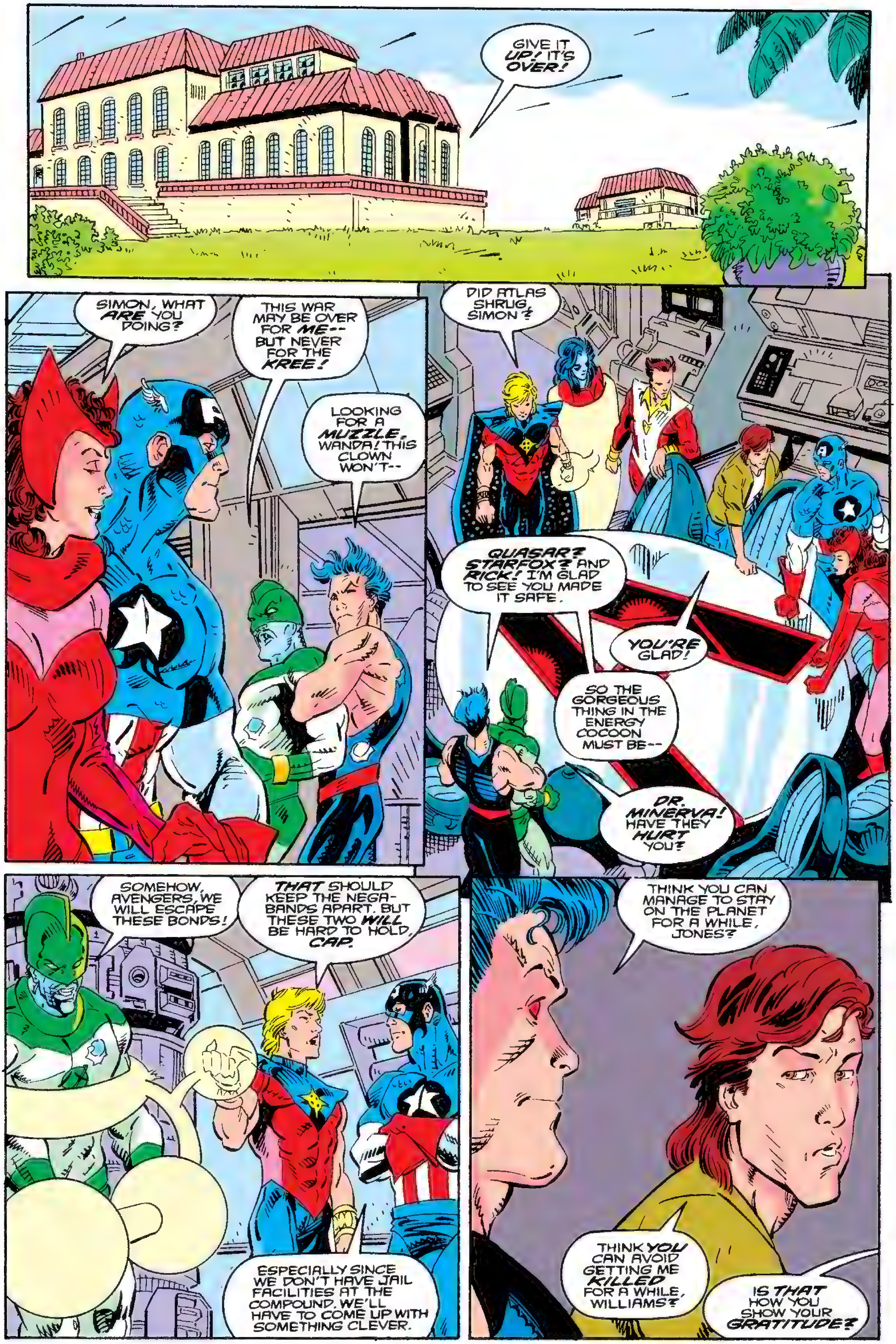

CLANG
KRAK
GYARRHHH!!!
WAIT!
FOOL!
THPP
ATLAS--
SIMON!
FOOL AGAIN!
WHUNCH

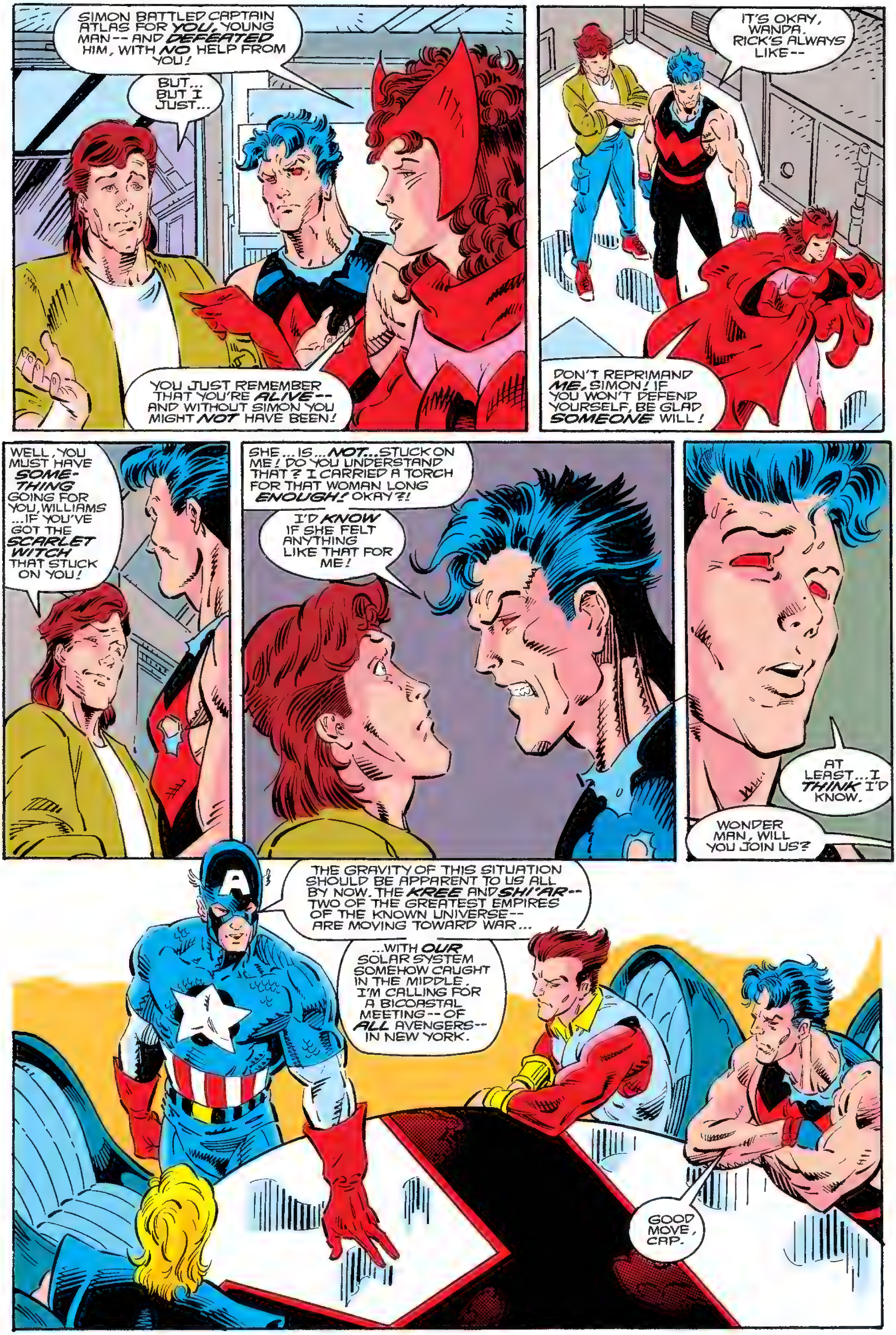

IF I COULD LAND... JUST ONE... GOOD...
CLANG
...BLAST IT. *STAY* THERE, RICK!
I *CAN'T!*
I'M GETTING HIS *TIMING*...
TIRED YET, "WONDER MAN"?
POK
ROLLED WITH THAT ONE.
THIS IS *IT*, ATLAS!
NOW FAKE A CHARGE-- AND *TIME* HIM! ONE...
...TWO...
NO!
...THREE!

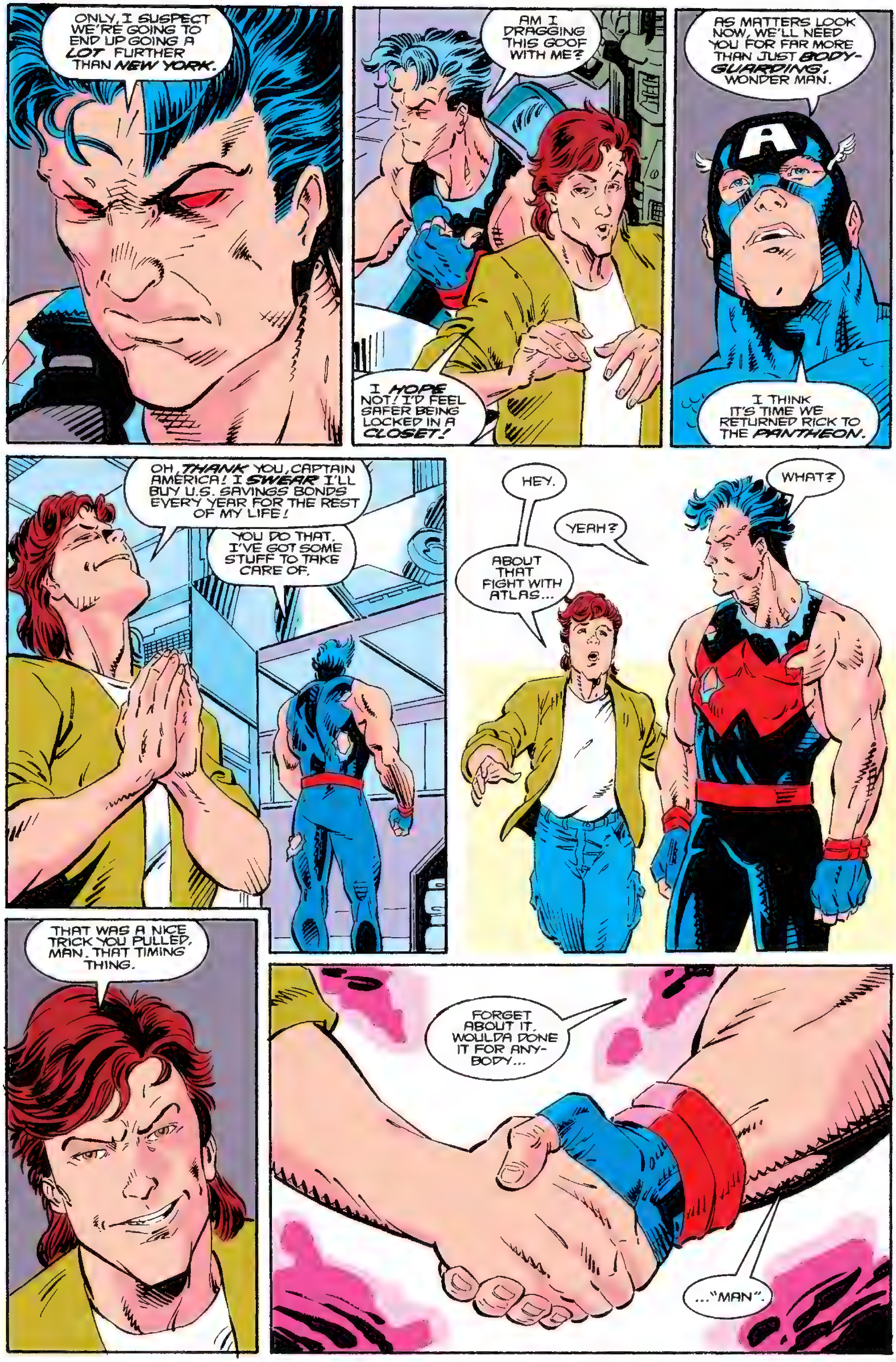

SHAKA BOOM

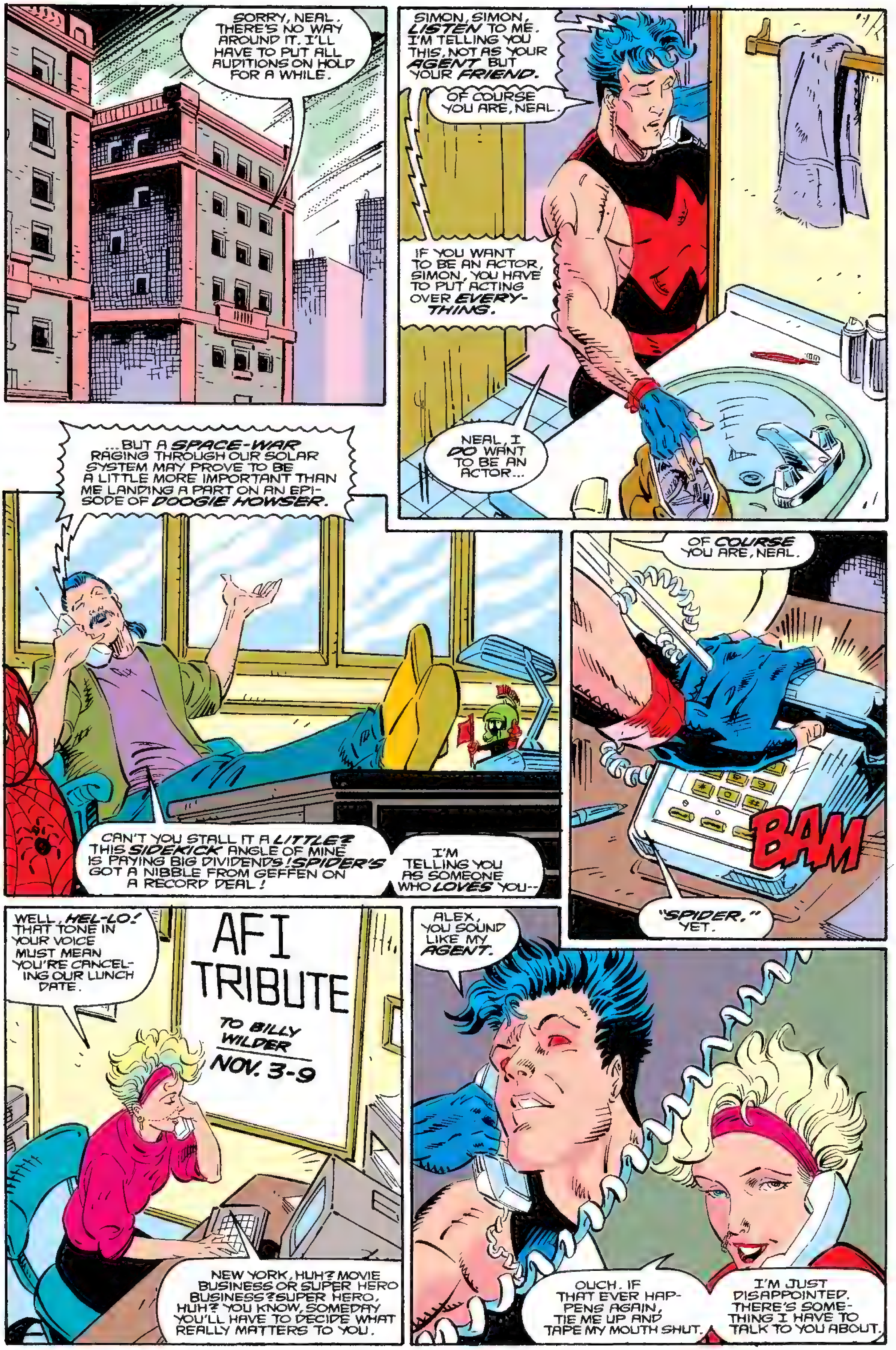

WHUMP
"DUCK SEASON."
NOW, KEEP THOSE ARMS APART. JUST KEEP HIM FROM CLANGING-- UNTIL I CAN GET HIM TO THE AVENGERS WEST COAST COMPLEX!
THIS ENERGY-FIELD SHOULD HOLD HIM-- WHETHER HE'S RICK OR ATLAS.
MEANING WE CAPTURE HIM...OR WONDER MAN CAN HANDLE HIM. EITHER WAY, WE SHOULD STOP HIM!
AND EITHER WAY--YOU WILL FAIL TO STOP THE KREE!
I DON'T CARE WHO'S STOPPING WHO! JUST HAND ME OVER TO THE HULK WHEN WE GET BACK...
...AND KEEP ME AWAY FROM THAT IDIOT WONDER MAN!

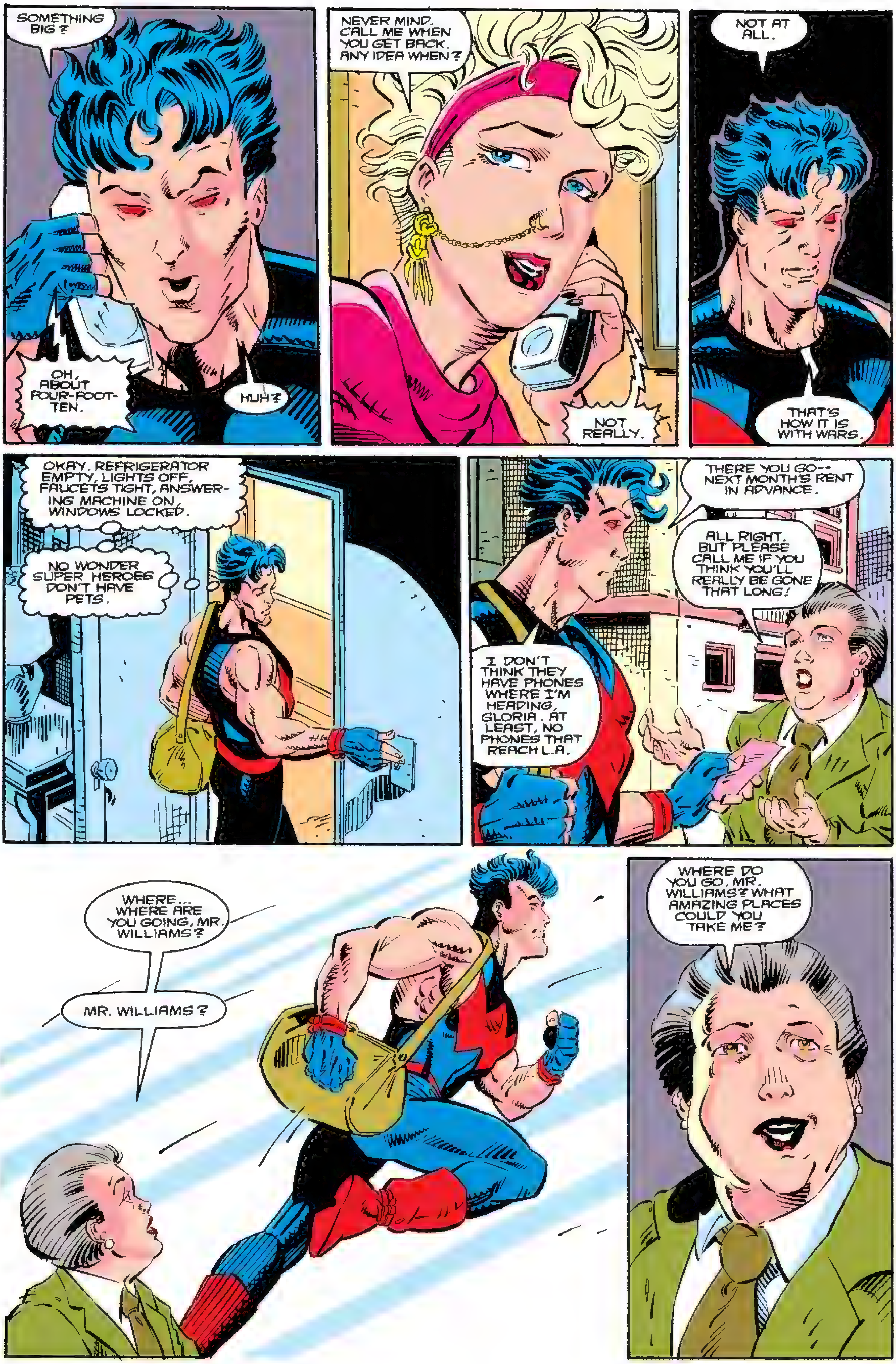

WAY, FAR AWAY...
CAN THERE BE A BLEAKER PLANETOID IN THE COSMOS?
A FITTING SIZE FOR MY CONTEMPLATION, FOR IT MIRROR'S THE EMPTINESS OF MY ETERNAL SOUL.
WHAT SENSE IN BEING AN IMMORTAL, IF ONE KNOWS NOT FROM WHENCE HE CAME OR WHERE HE GOES?
YOU WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED **DEMON DRUID**--
WHO CALLS ME?
THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE OF THE KREE CALLS YOU. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. I KNOW WHO YOUR PEOPLE ARE. COME TO THE ***KREE GALAXY*** AND ALL WILL BE REVEALED.
COME... ***ULTIMUS!***

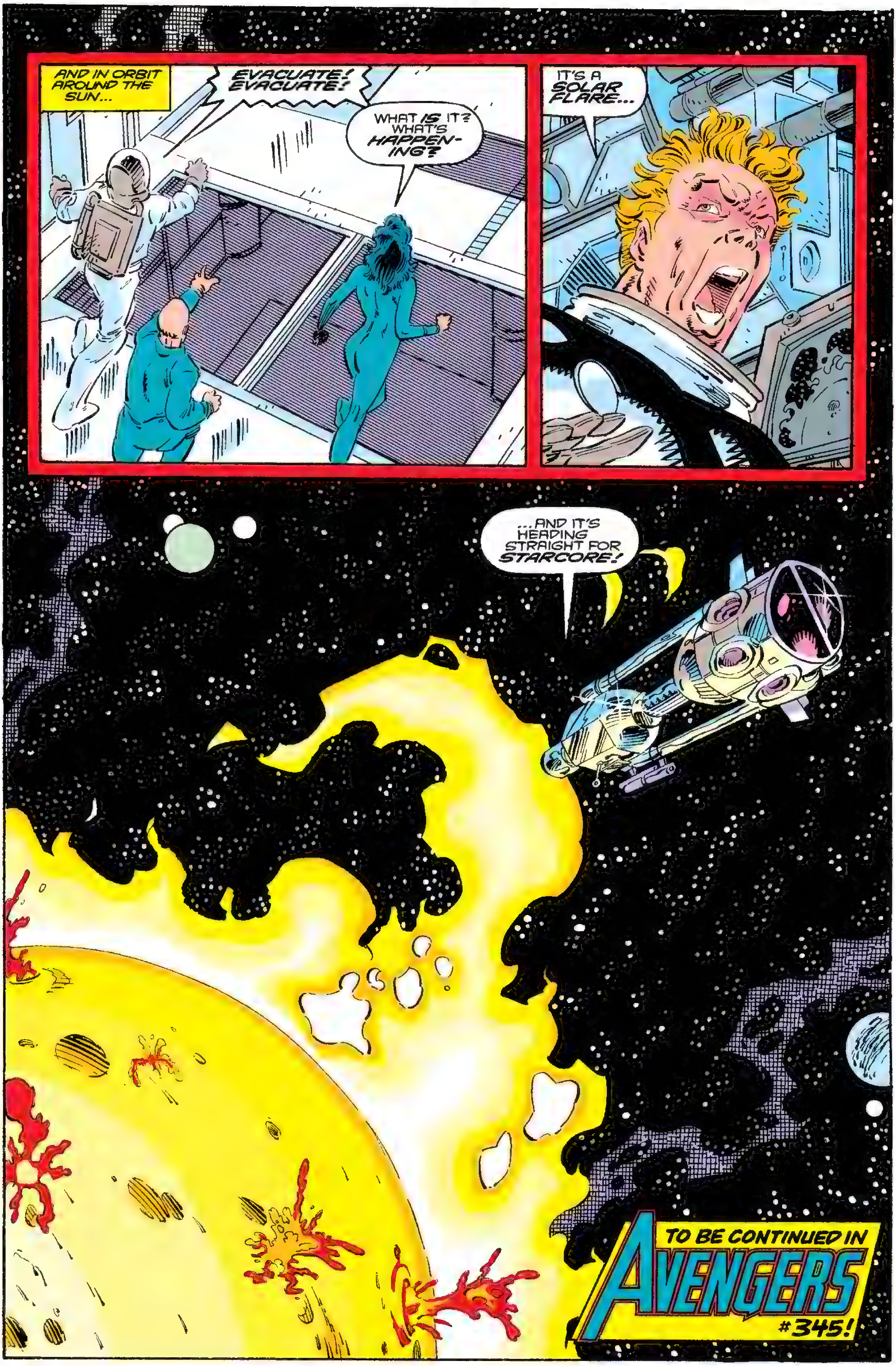

GIVE IT *UP!* IT'S *OVER!*
SIMON, WHAT *ARE* YOU DOING?
THIS WAR MAY BE OVER FOR *ME*-- BUT NEVER FOR THE *KREE!*
LOOKING FOR A *MUZZLE*, WANDA! THIS CLOWN WON'T--
DID ATLAS SHRUG, SIMON?
QUASAR? STARFOX? AND RICK! I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU MADE IT SAFE.
YOU'RE GLAD!
SO THE GORGEOUS THING IN THE ENERGY COCOON MUST BE--
DR. MINERVA! HAVE THEY *HURT* YOU?
SOMEHOW, AVENGERS, WE WILL ESCAPE THESE BONDS!
THAT SHOULD KEEP THE NEGA-BANDS APART. BUT THESE TWO *WILL* BE HARD TO HOLD, *CAP.*
ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DON'T HAVE JAIL FACILITIES AT THE COMPOUND. WE'LL HAVE TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING CLEVER.
THINK YOU CAN MANAGE TO STAY ON THE PLANET FOR A WHILE, JONES?
THINK *YOU* CAN AVOID GETTING ME *KILLED* FOR A WHILE, WILLIAMS?
IS *THAT* HOW YOU SHOW YOUR *GRATITUDE?*


SIMON BATTLED CAPTAIN ATLAS FOR **YOU**, YOUNG MAN-- AND **DEFEATED** HIM, WITH **NO** HELP FROM YOU!
BUT... BUT I JUST...
YOU JUST REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE **ALIVE**-- AND WITHOUT SIMON YOU MIGHT **NOT** HAVE BEEN!
IT'S OKAY, WANDA. RICK'S ALWAYS LIKE--
DON'T REPRIMAND **ME**, SIMON! IF YOU WON'T DEFEND YOURSELF, BE GLAD **SOMEONE** WILL!
WELL, YOU MUST HAVE **SOMETHING** GOING FOR YOU, WILLIAMS ...IF YOU'VE GOT THE **SCARLET WITCH** THAT STUCK ON YOU!
SHE... IS... **NOT**... STUCK ON ME! DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? I CARRIED A TORCH FOR THAT WOMAN LONG **ENOUGH!** OKAY?!
I'D **KNOW** IF SHE FELT ANYTHING LIKE THAT FOR ME!
AT LEAST... I **THINK** I'D KNOW.
WONDER MAN, WILL YOU JOIN US?
THE GRAVITY OF THIS SITUATION SHOULD BE APPARENT TO US ALL BY NOW. THE **KREE** AND **SHI'AR**-- TWO OF THE GREATEST EMPIRES OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE-- ARE MOVING TOWARD WAR...
...WITH **OUR** SOLAR SYSTEM SOMEHOW CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE. I'M CALLING FOR A BICOASTAL MEETING-- OF **ALL** AVENGERS-- IN NEW YORK.
GOOD MOVE, CAP.


ONLY, I SUSPECT WE'RE GOING TO END UP GOING A LOT FURTHER THAN NEW YORK.
AM I DRAGGING THIS GOOF WITH ME?
I HOPE NOT! I'D FEEL SAFER BEING LOCKED IN A CLOSET!
AS MATTERS LOOK NOW, WE'LL NEED YOU FOR FAR MORE THAN JUST BODY-GUARDING, WONDER MAN.
I THINK IT'S TIME WE RETURNED RICK TO THE PANTHEON.
OH, THANK YOU, CAPTAIN AMERICA! I SWEAR I'LL BUY U.S. SAVINGS BONDS EVERY YEAR FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
YOU DO THAT. I'VE GOT SOME STUFF TO TAKE CARE OF.
HEY.
WHAT?
YEAH?
ABOUT THAT FIGHT WITH ATLAS...
THAT WAS A NICE TRICK YOU PULLED, MAN. THAT TIMING THING.
FORGET ABOUT IT. WOULDA DONE IT FOR ANYBODY...
..."MAN".


SORRY, NEAL. THERE'S NO WAY AROUND IT. I'LL HAVE TO PUT ALL AUDITIONS ON HOLD FOR A WHILE.
SIMON, SIMON, LISTEN TO ME. I'M TELLING YOU THIS, NOT AS YOUR AGENT BUT YOUR FRIEND.
OF COURSE YOU ARE, NEAL.
IF YOU WANT TO BE AN ACTOR, SIMON, YOU HAVE TO PUT ACTING OVER EVERYTHING.
NEAL, I DO WANT TO BE AN ACTOR...
...BUT A SPACE-WAR RAGING THROUGH OUR SOLAR SYSTEM MAY PROVE TO BE A LITTLE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ME LANDING A PART ON AN EPISODE OF DOOGIE HOWSER.
CAN'T YOU STALL IT A LITTLE? THIS SIDEKICK ANGLE OF MINE IS PAYING BIG DIVIDENDS! SPIDER'S GOT A NIBBLE FROM GEFFEN ON A RECORD DEAL!
I'M TELLING YOU AS SOMEONE WHO LOVES YOU--
OF COURSE YOU ARE, NEAL.
BAM
"SPIDER," YET.
WELL, HEL-LO! THAT TONE IN YOUR VOICE MUST MEAN YOU'RE CANCELING OUR LUNCH DATE.
AFI TRIBUTE TO BILLY WILDER NOV. 3-9
NEW YORK, HUH? MOVIE BUSINESS OR SUPER HERO BUSINESS? SUPER HERO, HUH? YOU KNOW, SOMEDAY YOU'LL HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT REALLY MATTERS TO YOU.
ALEX, YOU SOUND LIKE MY AGENT.
OUCH. IF THAT EVER HAPPENS AGAIN, TIE ME UP AND TAPE MY MOUTH SHUT.
I'M JUST DISAPPOINTED. THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.


SOMETHING BIG?
OH, ABOUT FOUR-FOOT-TEN.
HUH?
NEVER MIND. CALL ME WHEN YOU GET BACK. ANY IDEA WHEN?
NOT REALLY.
NOT AT ALL.
THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH WARS.
OKAY. REFRIGERATOR EMPTY, LIGHTS OFF, FAUCETS TIGHT, ANSWERING MACHINE ON, WINDOWS LOCKED.
NO WONDER SUPER HEROES DON'T HAVE PETS.
THERE YOU GO-- NEXT MONTH'S RENT IN ADVANCE.
ALL RIGHT. BUT PLEASE CALL ME IF YOU THINK YOU'LL REALLY BE GONE THAT LONG!
I DON'T THINK THEY HAVE PHONES WHERE I'M HEADING, GLORIA. AT LEAST, NO PHONES THAT REACH L.A.
WHERE... WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MR. WILLIAMS?
MR. WILLIAMS?
WHERE DO YOU GO, MR. WILLIAMS? WHAT AMAZING PLACES COULD YOU TAKE ME?


AND IN ORBIT AROUND THE SUN...
EVACUATE! EVACUATE!
WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
IT'S A *SOLAR FLARE...*
...AND IT'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR *STARCORE!*
TO BE CONTINUED IN AVENGERS #345!

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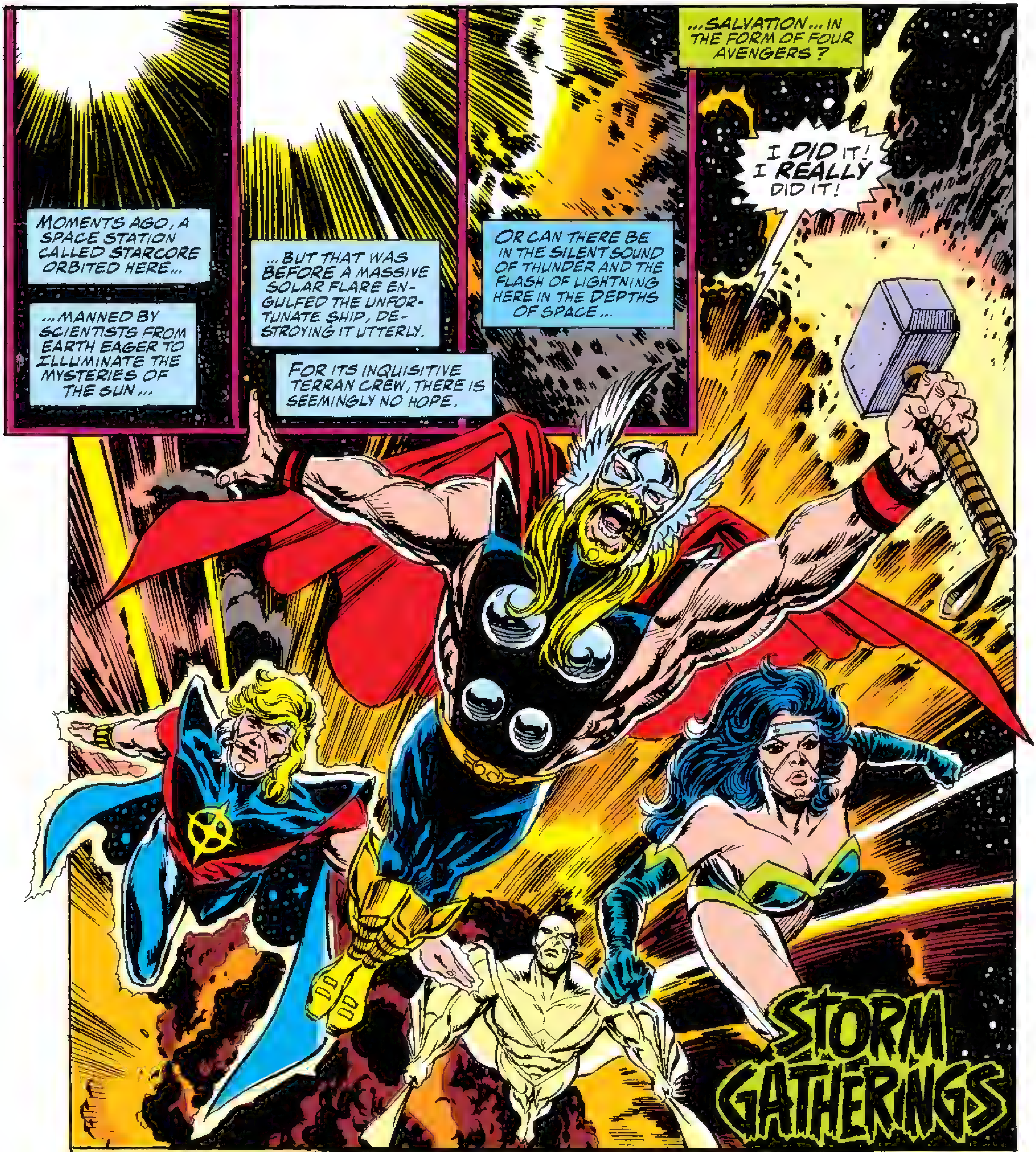
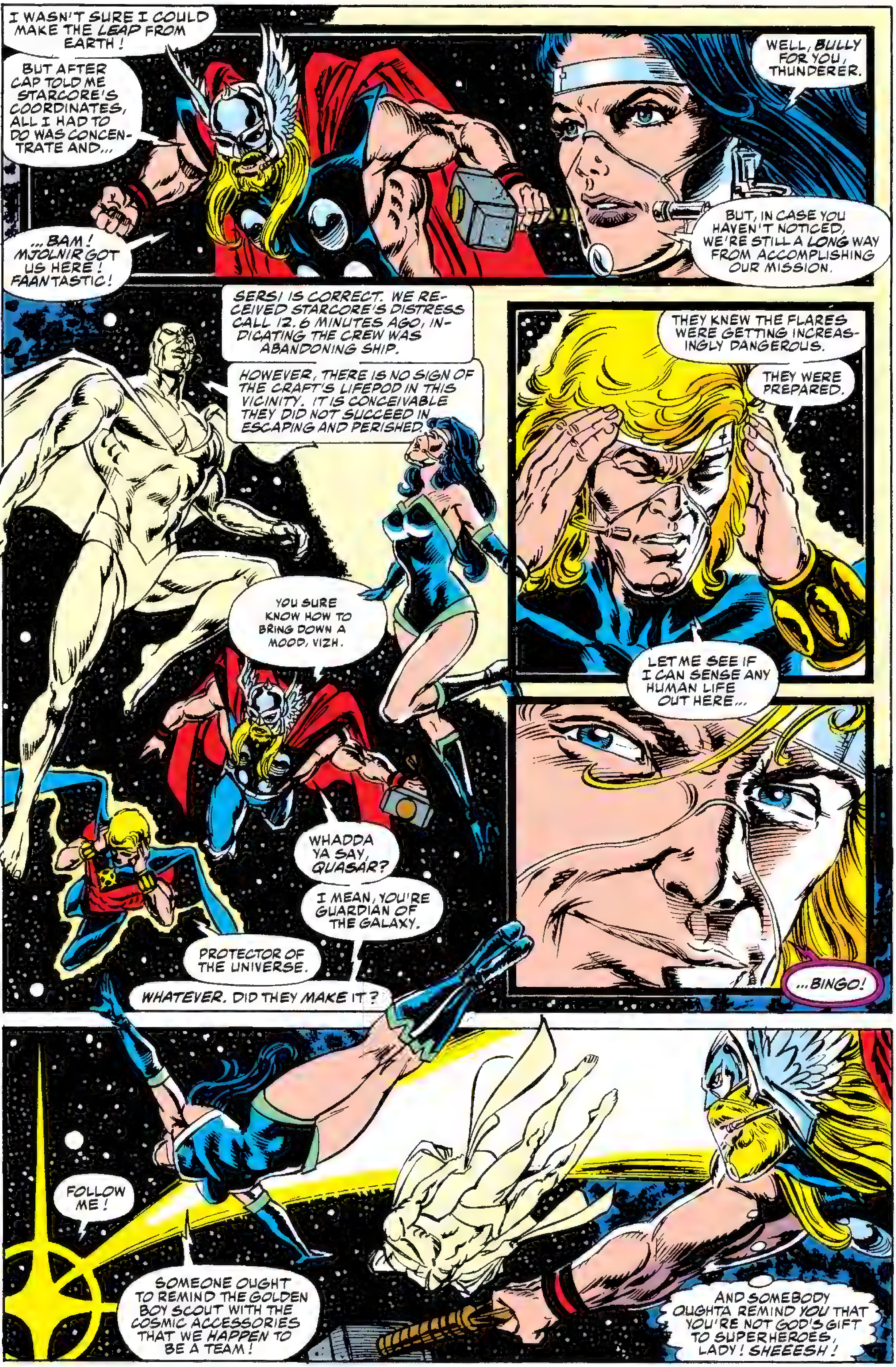
PART 5

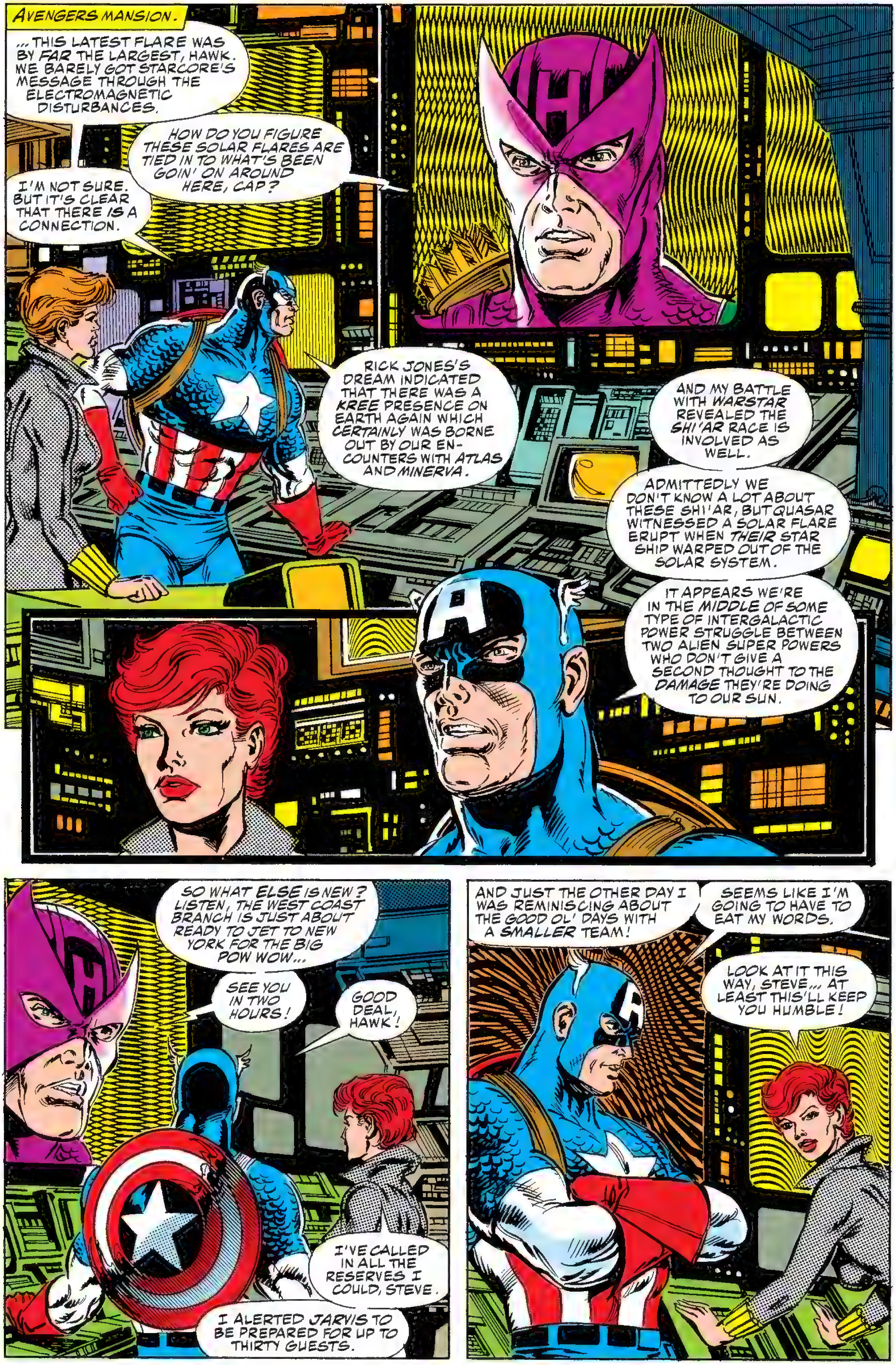
AVENGERS

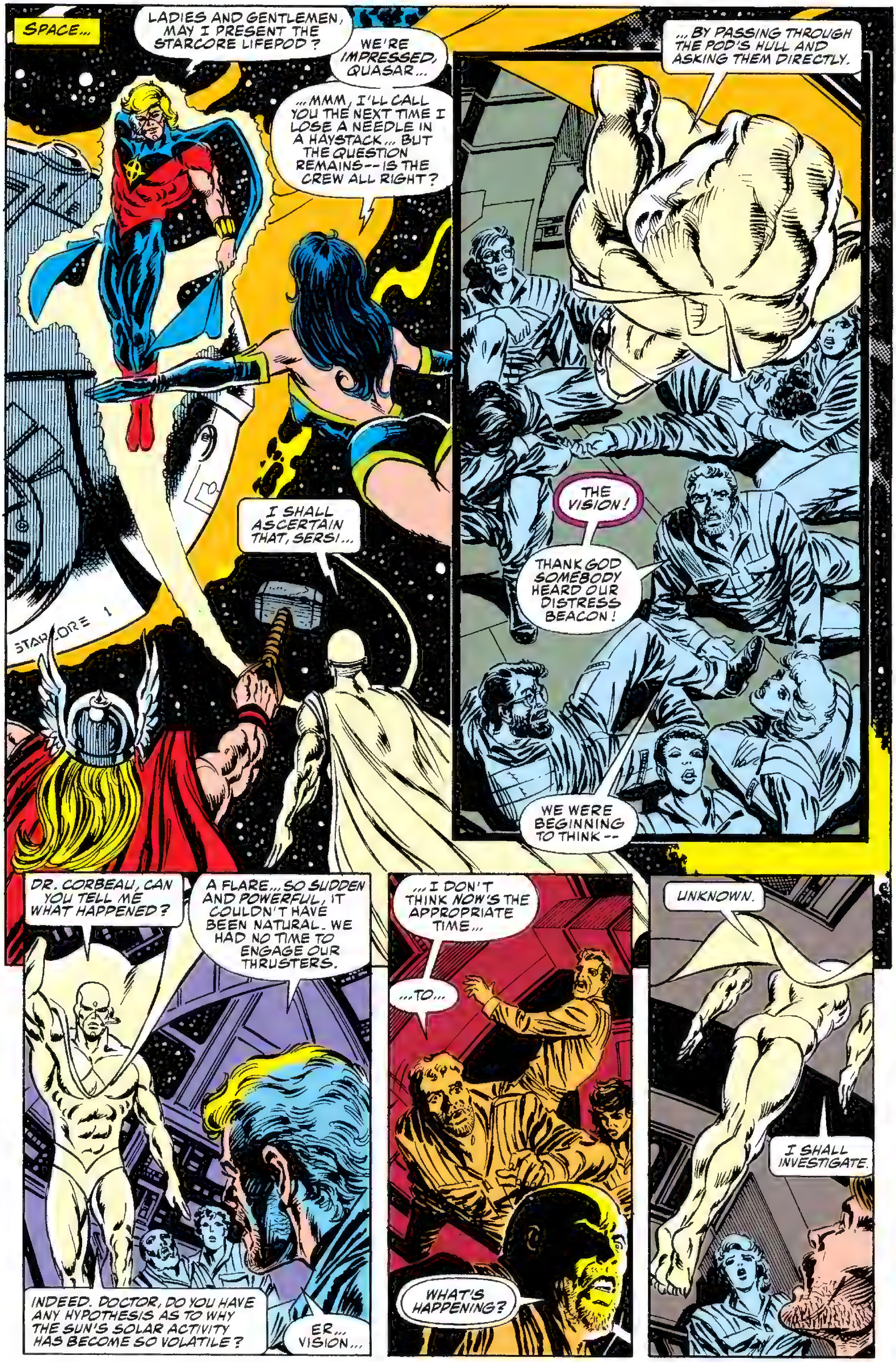
LONG-TIME AVENGERS ALLY **RICK JONES** WAS KIDNAPPED BY THE ALIEN **SHI'AR**. THE TOMB OF **CAPTAIN MARVEL** WAS RAIDED BY THE ALIEN **KREE**. INTERGALACTIC WAR IS ERUPTING BETWEEN TWO MIGHTY EMPIRES AND **EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES** ARE IN THE THICK OF IT!

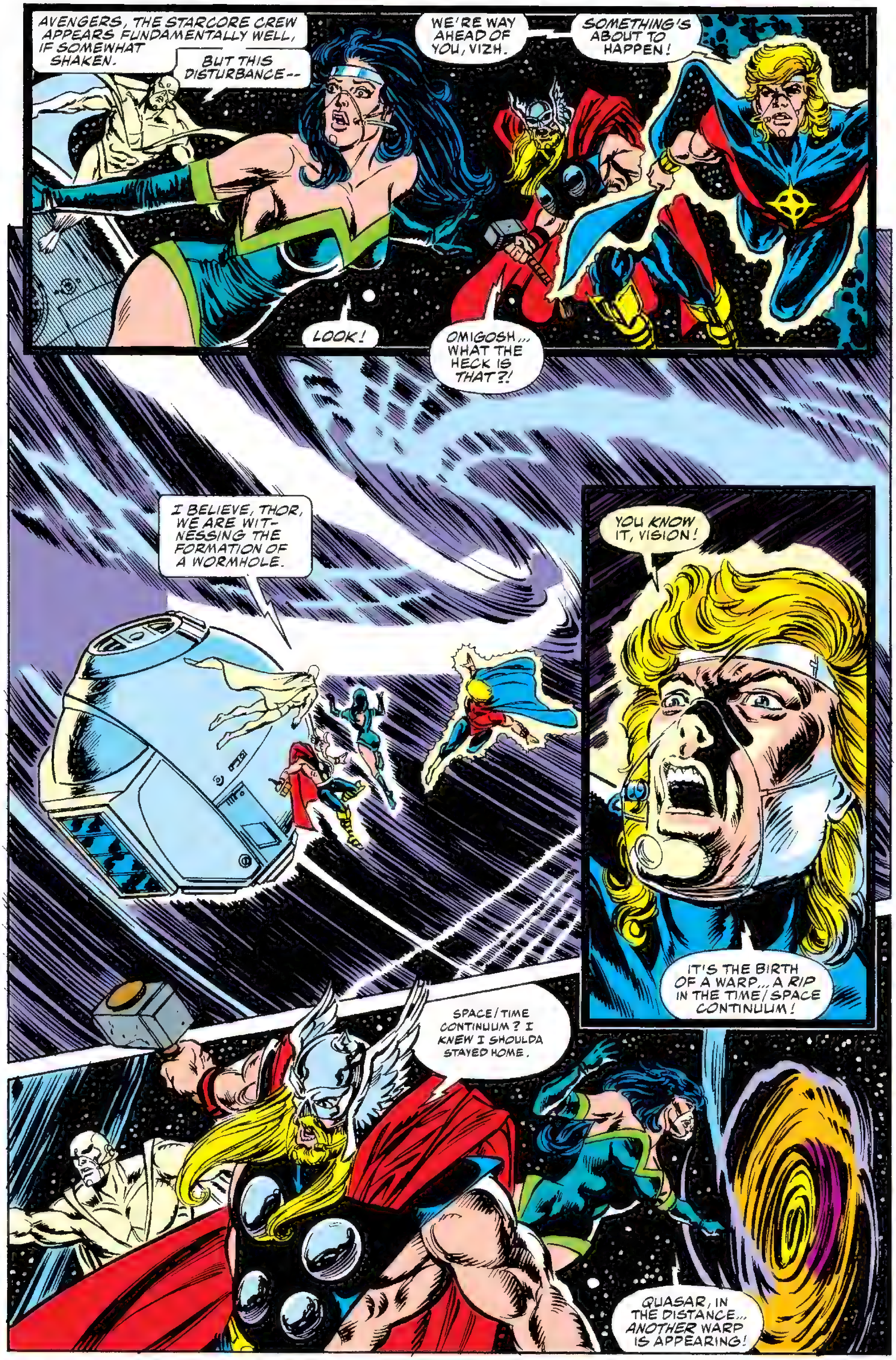

MOMENTS AGO, A SPACE STATION CALLED STARCORE ORBITED HERE...
...MANNED BY SCIENTISTS FROM EARTH EAGER TO ILLUMINATE THE MYSTERIES OF THE SUN...
...BUT THAT WAS BEFORE A MASSIVE SOLAR FLARE ENGULFED THE UNFORTUNATE SHIP, DESTROYING IT UTTERLY.
FOR ITS INQUISITIVE TERRAN CREW, THERE IS SEEMINGLY NO HOPE.
OR CAN THERE BE IN THE SILENT SOUND OF THUNDER AND THE FLASH OF LIGHTNING HERE IN THE DEPTHS OF SPACE...
...SALVATION... IN THE FORM OF FOUR AVENGERS?
I DID IT! I REALLY DID IT!
STORM GATHERINGS

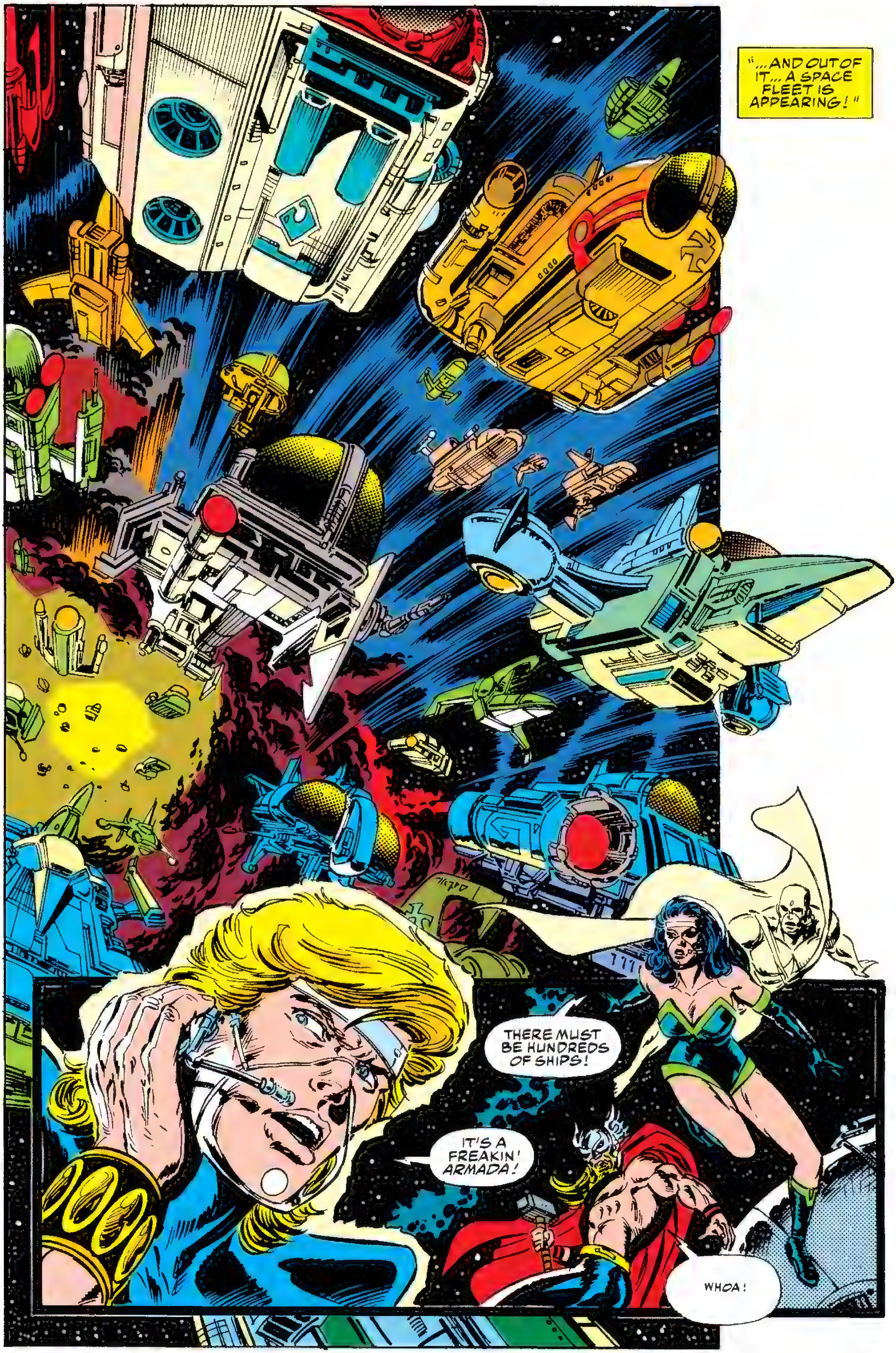
BOB HARRAS WRITER / STEVE EPTING PENCILER / TOM PALMER COLORIST / INKER / BILL OAKLEY LETTERER / RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR / TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

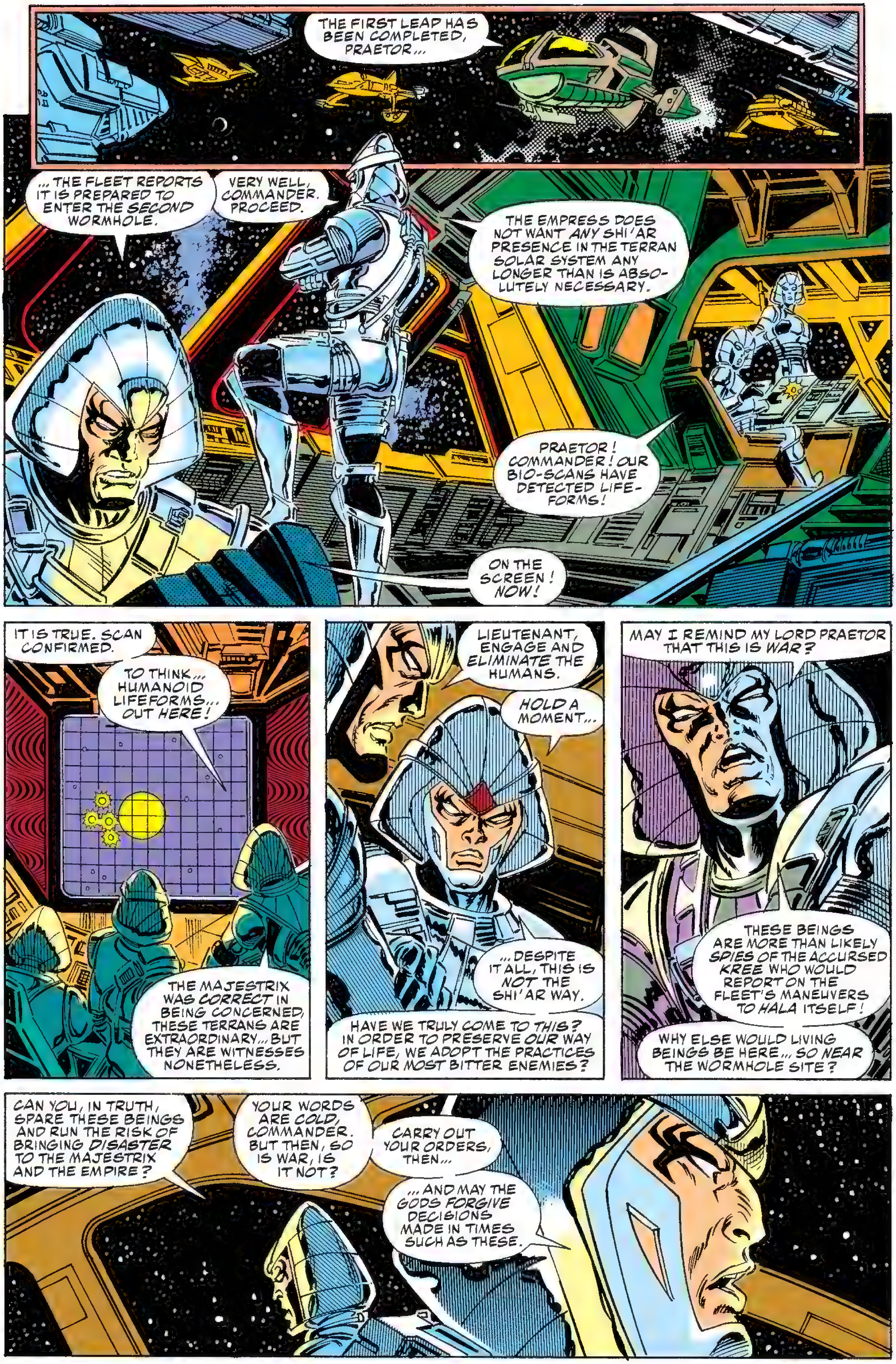

I WASN'T SURE I COULD MAKE THE *LEAP* FROM EARTH!
BUT AFTER CAP TOLD ME STARCORE'S COORDINATES, ALL I HAD TO DO WAS CONCENTRATE AND...
...*BAM!* *MJOLNIR* GOT US HERE! *FAANTASTIC!*
WELL, *BULLY* FOR YOU, THUNDERER.
BUT, IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, WE'RE STILL A *LONG* WAY FROM ACCOMPLISHING OUR MISSION.
SERSI IS CORRECT. WE RECEIVED STARCORE'S DISTRESS CALL 12.6 MINUTES AGO, INDICATING THE CREW WAS ABANDONING SHIP.
HOWEVER, THERE IS NO SIGN OF THE CRAFT'S LIFEPOD IN THIS VICINITY. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THEY DID NOT SUCCEED IN ESCAPING AND PERISHED.
YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO BRING DOWN A MOOD, VIZH.
WHADDA YA SAY, *QUASAR?*
I MEAN, YOU'RE GUARDIAN OF THE GALAXY.
PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE.
WHATEVER. DID THEY *MAKE* IT?
THEY KNEW THE FLARES WERE GETTING INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS.
THEY WERE PREPARED.
LET ME SEE IF I CAN SENSE ANY HUMAN LIFE OUT HERE...
...*BINGO!*
FOLLOW ME!
SOMEONE OUGHT TO REMIND THE GOLDEN BOY SCOUT WITH THE COSMIC ACCESSORIES THAT WE HAPPEN TO BE A TEAM!
AND SOMEBODY OUGHTA REMIND *YOU* THAT YOU'RE NOT GOD'S GIFT TO SUPERHEROES, LADY! *SHEEESH!*

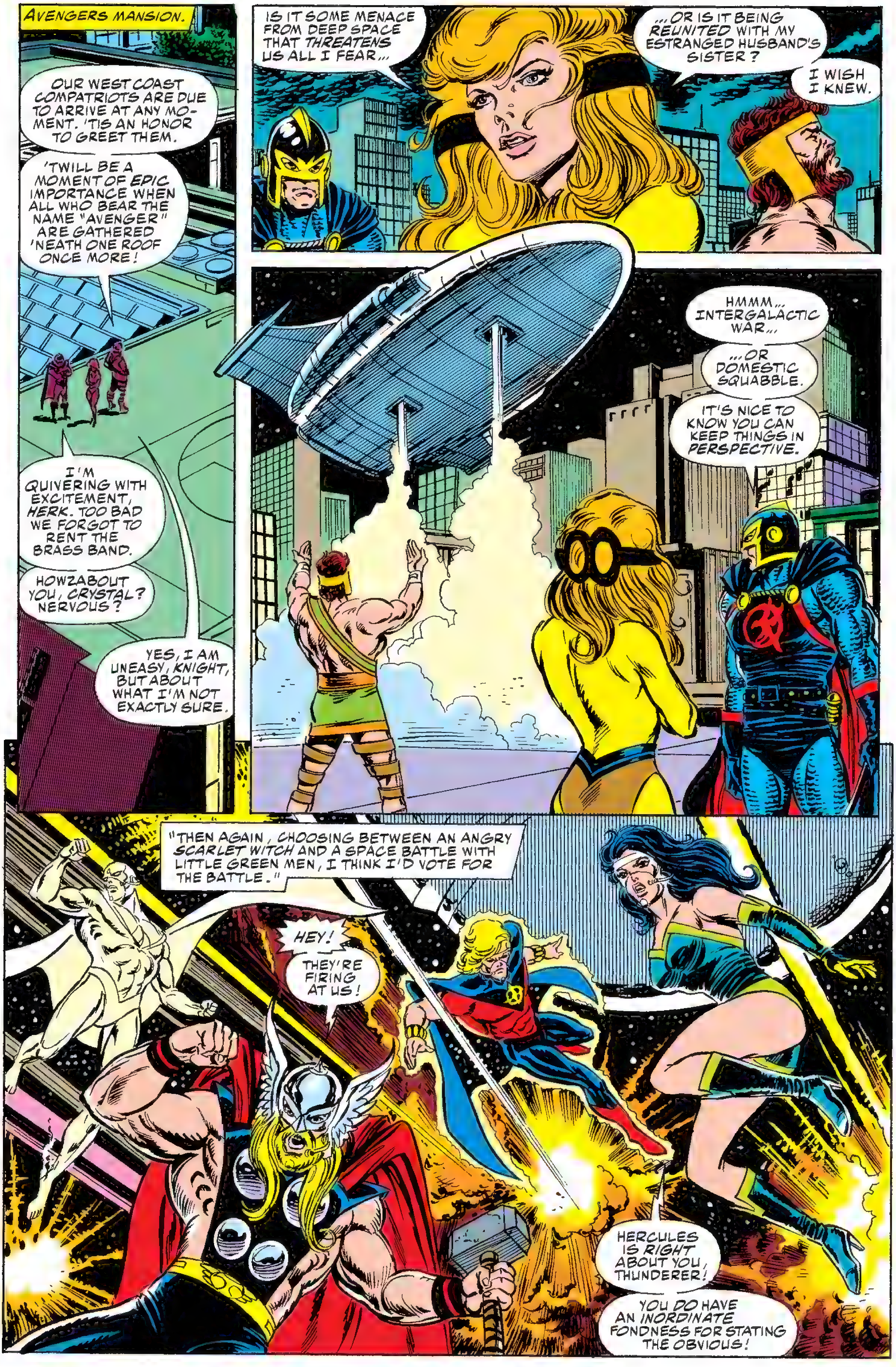

AVENGERS MANSION.
...THIS LATEST FLARE WAS BY *FAR* THE LARGEST, HAWK. WE BARELY GOT STARCORE'S MESSAGE THROUGH THE ELECTROMAGNETIC DISTURBANCES.
HOW DO YOU FIGURE THESE SOLAR FLARES ARE TIED IN TO WHAT'S BEEN GOIN' ON AROUND HERE, CAP?
I'M NOT SURE. BUT IT'S CLEAR THAT THERE *IS* A CONNECTION.
RICK JONES'S DREAM INDICATED THAT THERE WAS A *KREE* PRESENCE ON EARTH AGAIN WHICH *CERTAINLY* WAS BORNE OUT BY OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH *ATLAS* AND *MINERVA*.
AND MY BATTLE WITH *WARSTAR* REVEALED THE *SHI'AR* RACE IS INVOLVED AS WELL.
ADMITTEDLY WE DON'T KNOW A LOT ABOUT THESE SHI'AR, BUT QUASAR WITNESSED A SOLAR FLARE ERUPT WHEN *THEIR* STAR SHIP WARPED OUT OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.
IT APPEARS WE'RE IN THE *MIDDLE* OF SOME TYPE OF INTERGALACTIC POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN TWO ALIEN SUPER POWERS WHO DON'T GIVE A SECOND THOUGHT TO THE *DAMAGE* THEY'RE DOING TO OUR SUN.
SO WHAT *ELSE* IS NEW? LISTEN, THE WEST COAST BRANCH IS JUST ABOUT READY TO JET TO NEW YORK FOR THE BIG POW WOW...
SEE YOU IN TWO HOURS!
GOOD DEAL, HAWK!
I'VE CALLED IN ALL THE RESERVES I COULD, STEVE.
I ALERTED *JARVIS* TO BE PREPARED FOR UP TO THIRTY GUESTS.
AND JUST THE OTHER DAY I WAS REMINISCING ABOUT THE *GOOD OL'* DAYS WITH A *SMALLER* TEAM!
SEEMS LIKE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO EAT MY WORDS.
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, STEVE... AT LEAST THIS'LL KEEP YOU HUMBLE!

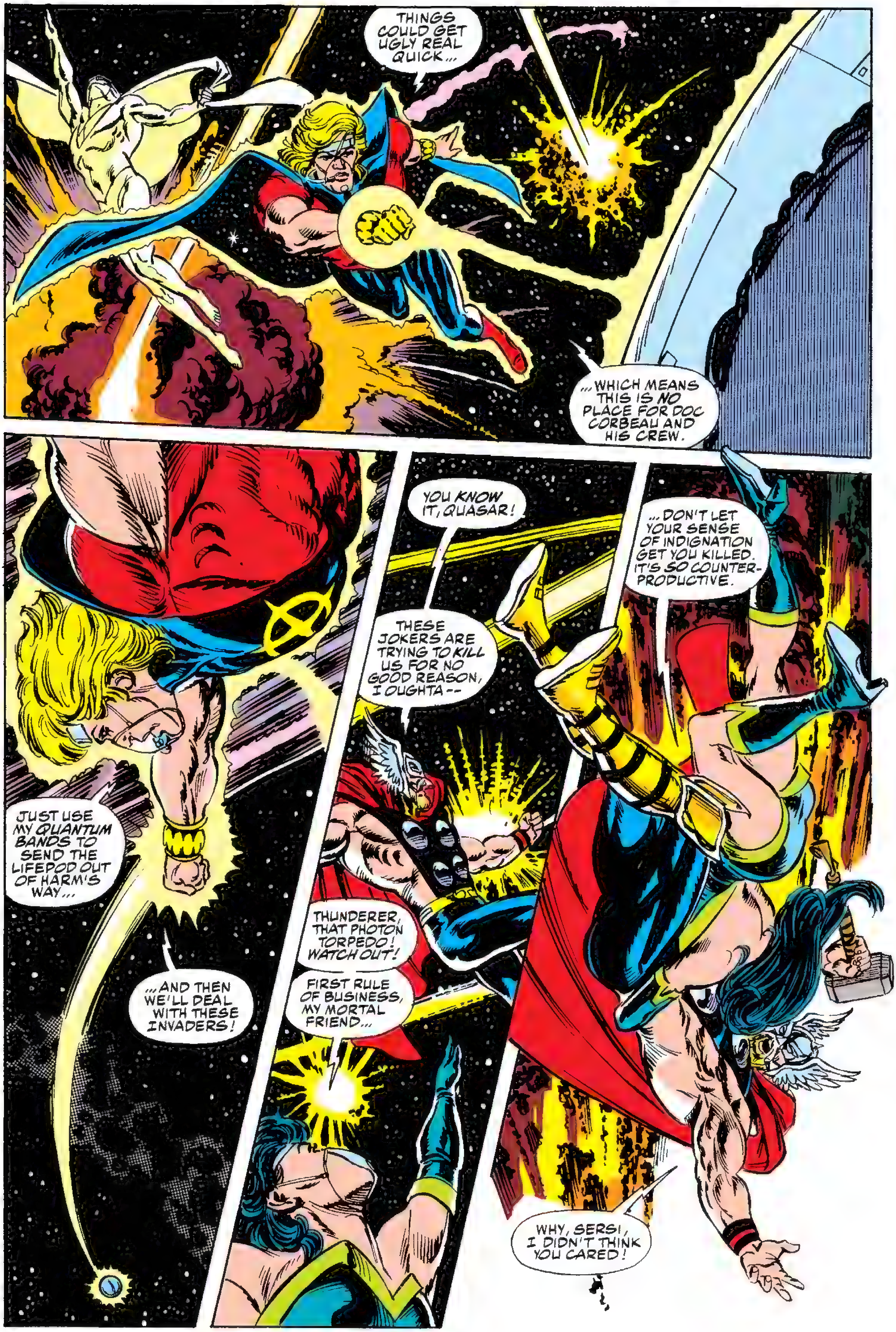

SPACE...
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MAY I PRESENT THE STARCORE LIFEPOD?
WE'RE IMPRESSED, QUASAR...
...MMM, I'LL CALL YOU THE NEXT TIME I LOSE A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK... BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS-- IS THE CREW ALL RIGHT?
I SHALL ASCERTAIN THAT, SERSI...
STARCORE 1
...BY PASSING THROUGH THE POD'S HULL AND ASKING THEM DIRECTLY.
THE VISION!
THANK GOD SOMEBODY HEARD OUR DISTRESS BEACON!
WE WERE BEGINNING TO THINK --
DR. CORBEAU, CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?
A FLARE... SO SUDDEN AND POWERFUL, IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN NATURAL. WE HAD NO TIME TO ENGAGE OUR THRUSTERS.
INDEED. DOCTOR, DO YOU HAVE ANY HYPOTHESIS AS TO WHY THE SUN'S SOLAR ACTIVITY HAS BECOME SO VOLATILE?
ER... VISION...
...I DON'T THINK NOW'S THE APPROPRIATE TIME...
...TO...
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
UNKNOWN.
I SHALL INVESTIGATE.


AVENGERS, THE STARCORE CREW APPEARS FUNDAMENTALLY WELL, IF SOMEWHAT SHAKEN.
BUT THIS DISTURBANCE--
WE'RE WAY AHEAD OF YOU, VIZH.
SOMETHING'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN!
LOOK!
OMIGOSH... WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?!
I BELIEVE, THOR, WE ARE WITNESSING THE FORMATION OF A WORMHOLE.
YOU KNOW IT, VISION!
IT'S THE BIRTH OF A WARP... A RIP IN THE TIME/SPACE CONTINUUM!
SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM? I KNEW I SHOULDA STAYED HOME.
QUASAR, IN THE DISTANCE... ANOTHER WARP IS APPEARING!

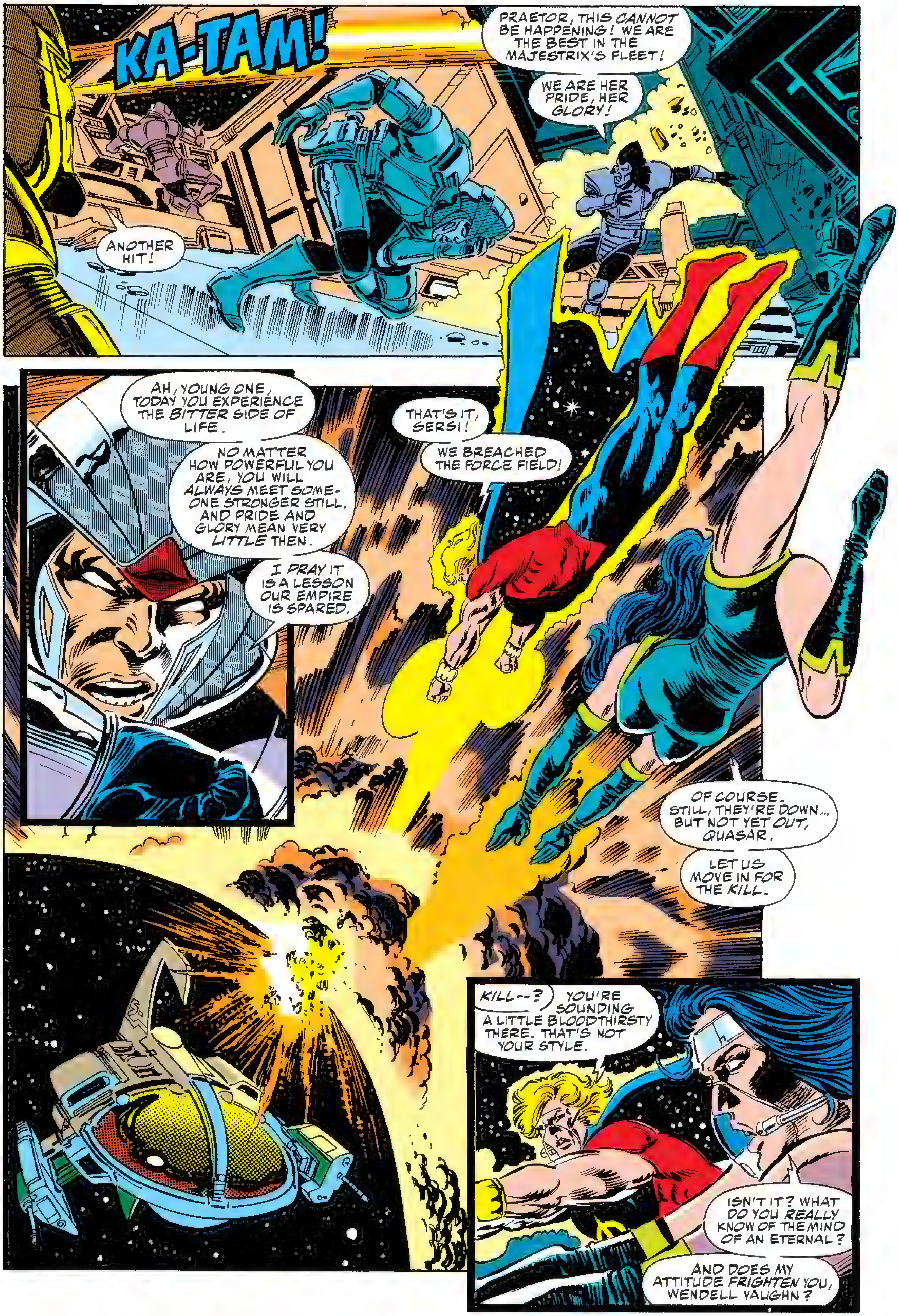

"...AND OUT OF IT... A SPACE FLEET IS APPEARING!"
THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS OF SHIPS!
IT'S A FREAKIN' ARMADA!
WHOA!

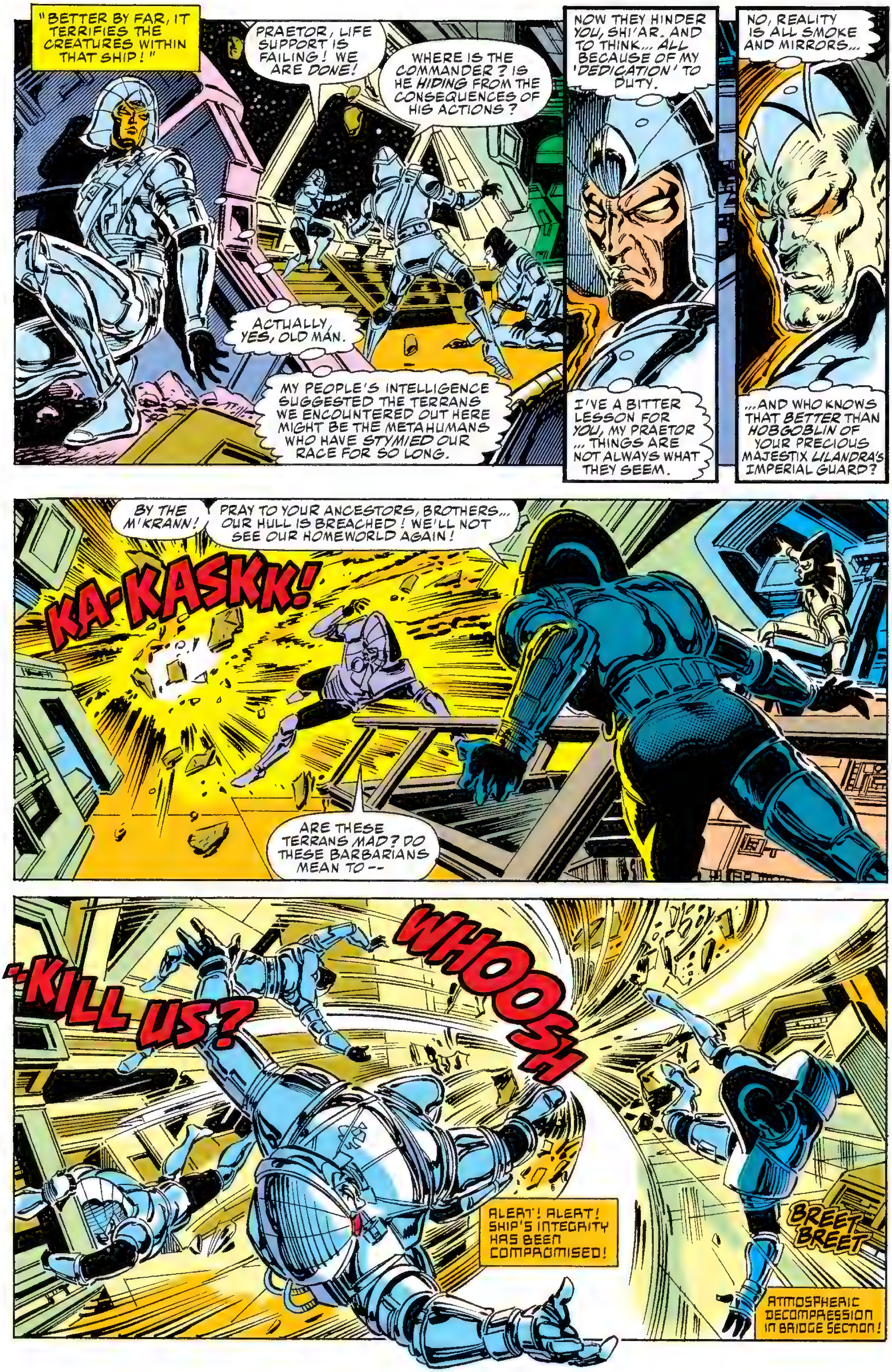

THE FIRST LEAP HAS BEEN COMPLETED, PRAETOR...
...THE FLEET REPORTS IT IS PREPARED TO ENTER THE *SECOND* WORMHOLE.
VERY WELL, COMMANDER. PROCEED.
THE EMPRESS DOES NOT WANT *ANY* SHI'AR PRESENCE IN THE TERRAN SOLAR SYSTEM ANY LONGER THAN IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.
PRAETOR! COMMANDER! OUR BIO-SCANS HAVE DETECTED LIFE-FORMS!
ON THE SCREEN! *NOW!*
IT IS TRUE. SCAN CONFIRMED.
TO THINK... HUMANOID LIFEFORMS... OUT HERE!
THE MAJESTRIX WAS *CORRECT* IN BEING CONCERNED. THESE TERRANS ARE EXTRAORDINARY... BUT THEY ARE WITNESSES NONETHELESS.
LIEUTENANT, ENGAGE AND *ELIMINATE* THE HUMANS.
HOLD A MOMENT...
...DESPITE IT ALL, THIS IS *NOT* THE SHI'AR WAY.
HAVE WE TRULY COME TO *THIS?* IN ORDER TO PRESERVE *OUR* WAY OF LIFE, WE ADOPT THE PRACTICES OF OUR *MOST* BITTER ENEMIES?
MAY I REMIND MY LORD PRAETOR THAT THIS IS *WAR?*
THESE BEINGS ARE MORE THAN LIKELY *SPIES* OF THE ACCURSED *KREE* WHO WOULD REPORT ON THE FLEET'S MANEUVERS TO *HALA* ITSELF!
WHY ELSE WOULD LIVING BEINGS BE HERE... SO *NEAR* THE WORMHOLE SITE?
CAN YOU, IN TRUTH, SPARE THESE BEINGS AND RUN THE RISK OF BRINGING *DISASTER* TO THE MAJESTRIX AND THE EMPIRE?
YOUR WORDS ARE *COLD,* COMMANDER. BUT THEN, SO IS WAR, IS IT NOT?
CARRY OUT YOUR ORDERS, THEN...
...AND MAY THE GODS *FORGIVE* DECISIONS MADE IN TIMES SUCH AS THESE.

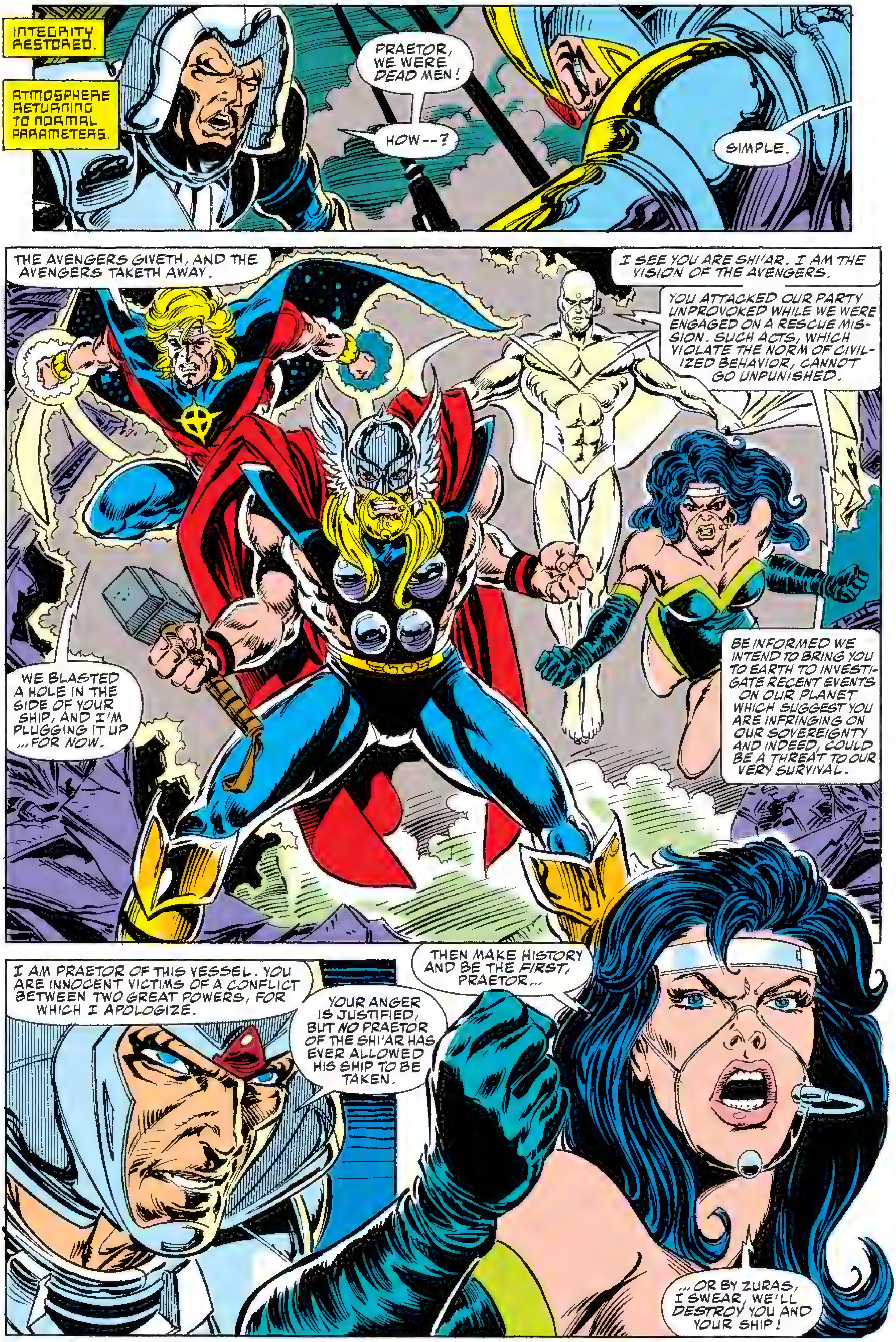

AVENGERS MANSION.
OUR WEST COAST COMPATRIOTS ARE DUE TO ARRIVE AT ANY MOMENT. 'TIS AN HONOR TO GREET THEM.
'TWILL BE A MOMENT OF *EPIC* IMPORTANCE WHEN ALL WHO BEAR THE NAME "AVENGER" ARE GATHERED 'NEATH ONE ROOF ONCE MORE!
I'M QUIVERING WITH EXCITEMENT, *HERK*. TOO BAD WE FORGOT TO RENT THE BRASS BAND.
HOWZABOUT YOU, *CRYSTAL*? NERVOUS?
YES, I AM UNEASY, *KNIGHT*, BUT ABOUT WHAT I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE.
IS IT SOME MENACE FROM DEEP SPACE THAT *THREATENS* US ALL I FEAR...
...OR IS IT BEING *REUNITED* WITH MY ESTRANGED HUSBAND'S SISTER?
I WISH I KNEW.
HMMM... INTERGALACTIC WAR...
...OR DOMESTIC SQUABBLE.
IT'S NICE TO KNOW YOU CAN KEEP THINGS IN *PERSPECTIVE*.
"THEN AGAIN, CHOOSING BETWEEN AN ANGRY *SCARLET WITCH* AND A SPACE BATTLE WITH LITTLE GREEN MEN, I THINK I'D VOTE FOR THE BATTLE."
HEY!
THEY'RE FIRING AT US!
HERCULES IS *RIGHT* ABOUT YOU, THUNDERER!
YOU *DO* HAVE AN *INORDINATE* FONDNESS FOR STATING THE OBVIOUS!

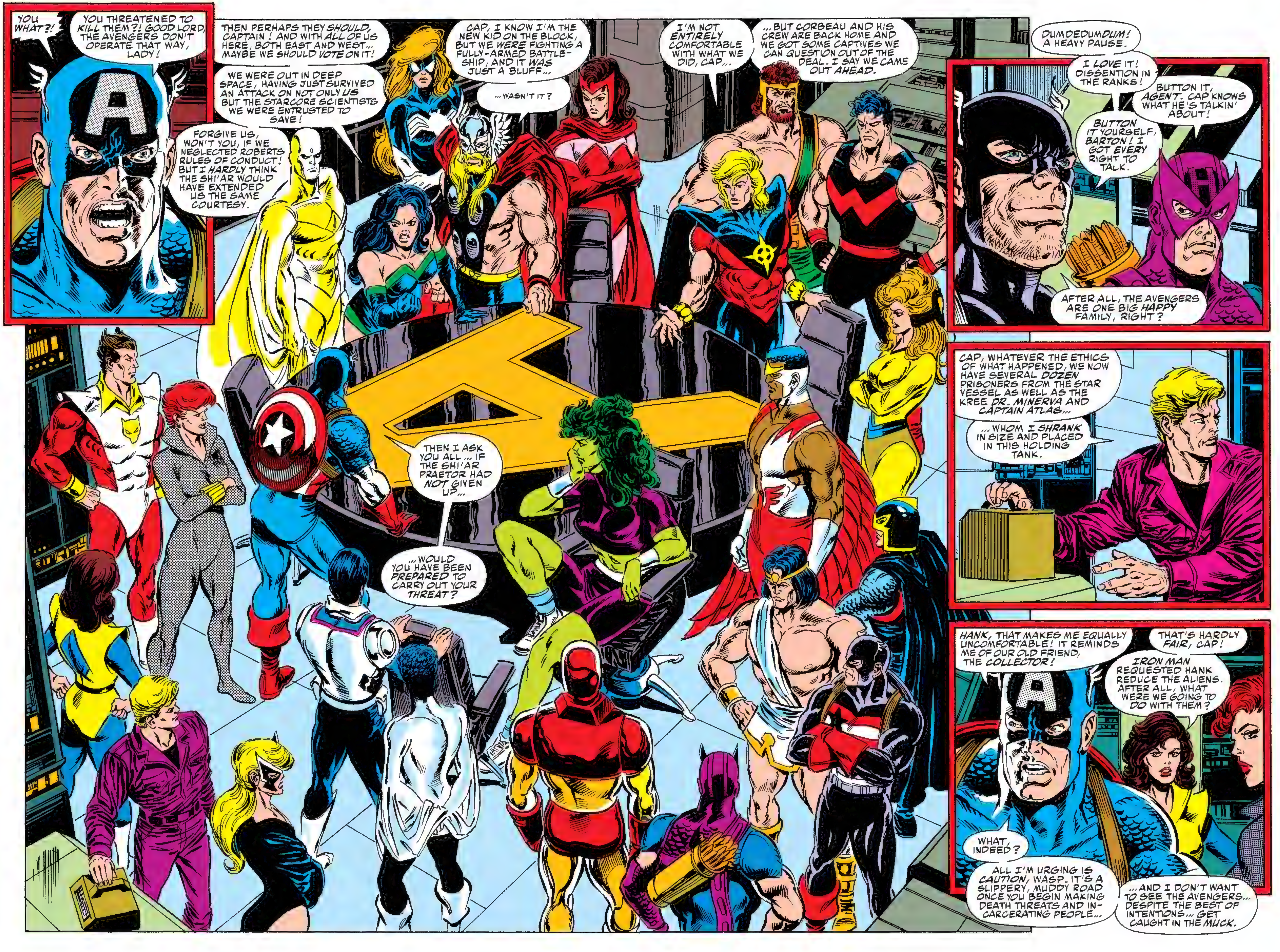

THINGS COULD GET UGLY REAL QUICK...
...WHICH MEANS THIS IS *NO* PLACE FOR DOC CORBEAU AND HIS CREW.
JUST USE MY *QUANTUM BANDS* TO SEND THE LIFEPOD OUT OF HARM'S WAY...
...AND THEN WE'LL DEAL WITH THESE INVADERS!
YOU *KNOW* IT, QUASAR!
THESE JOKERS ARE TRYING TO *KILL* US FOR NO GOOD REASON, I OUGHTA--
THUNDERER, THAT PHOTON TORPEDO! *WATCH OUT!*
FIRST RULE OF BUSINESS, MY MORTAL FRIEND...
...DON'T LET YOUR SENSE OF INDIGNATION GET YOU KILLED. IT'S *SO* COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.
WHY, SERSI, I DIDN'T THINK YOU CARED!

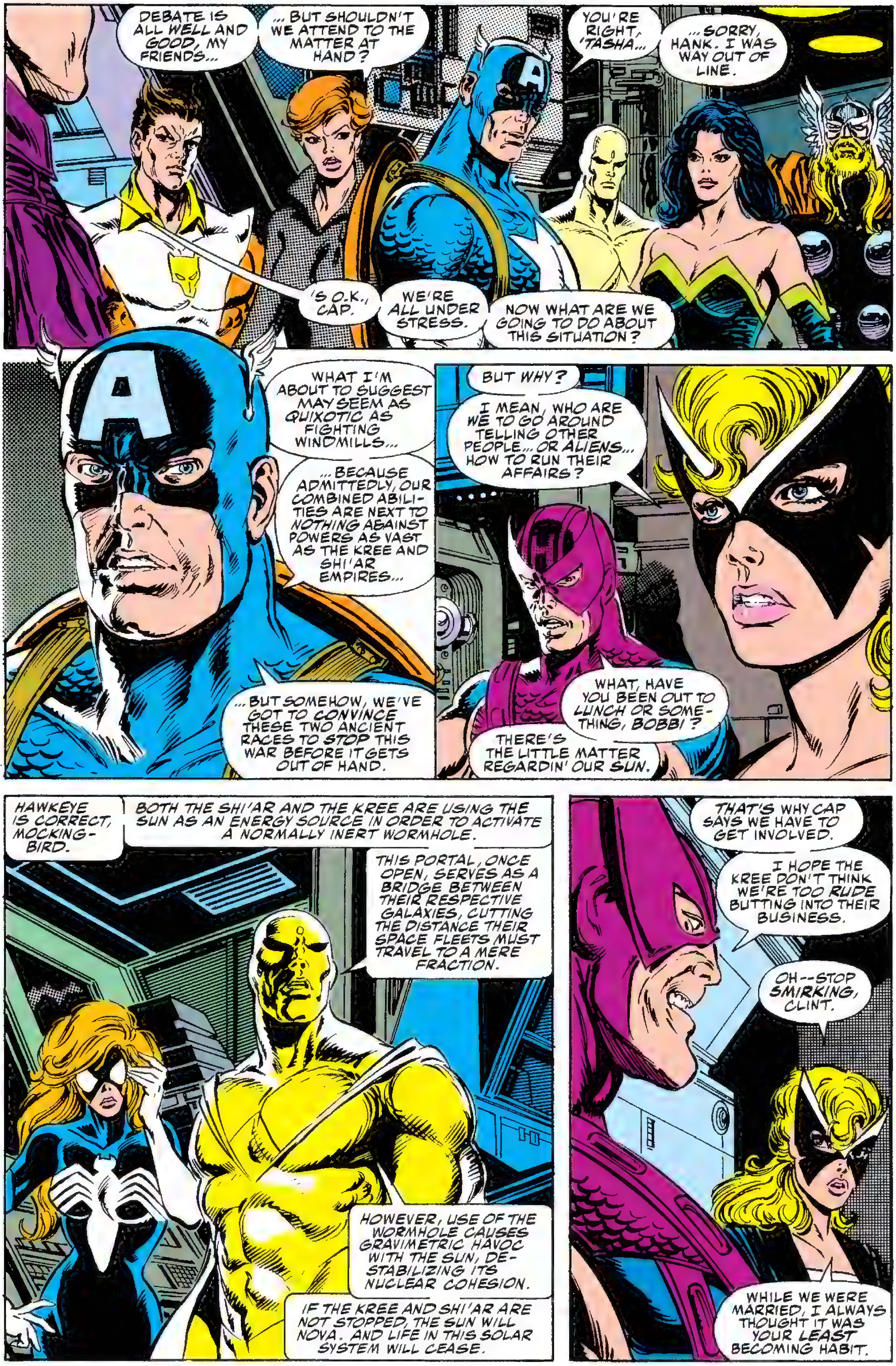
BUT... THANKS FOR SAVING MY BUTT.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
YOU'RE RAW... NAIVE... HEADSTRONG...
...BUT I THINK YOU HAVE POSSIBILITIES.
VISION, I DO BELIEVE I'VE MADE OUR NEOPHYTE GODLING BLUSH.
I WILL STORE THAT INFORMATION IN THE PROPER DATA BANK, SERSI...
...BUT NOW I SUGGEST WE RETALIATE AGAINST THIS AGGRESSION.
YOU KNOW IT, BOSS!
URU HAMMER, DO YOUR STUFF!
KA-TANG
PRAETOR! K'YTHRI PRESERVE US, THE TERRANS HAVE UNLEASHED SOME SORT OF INCREDIBLE WEAPON!
OUR SHIELDS ARE BUCKLING!

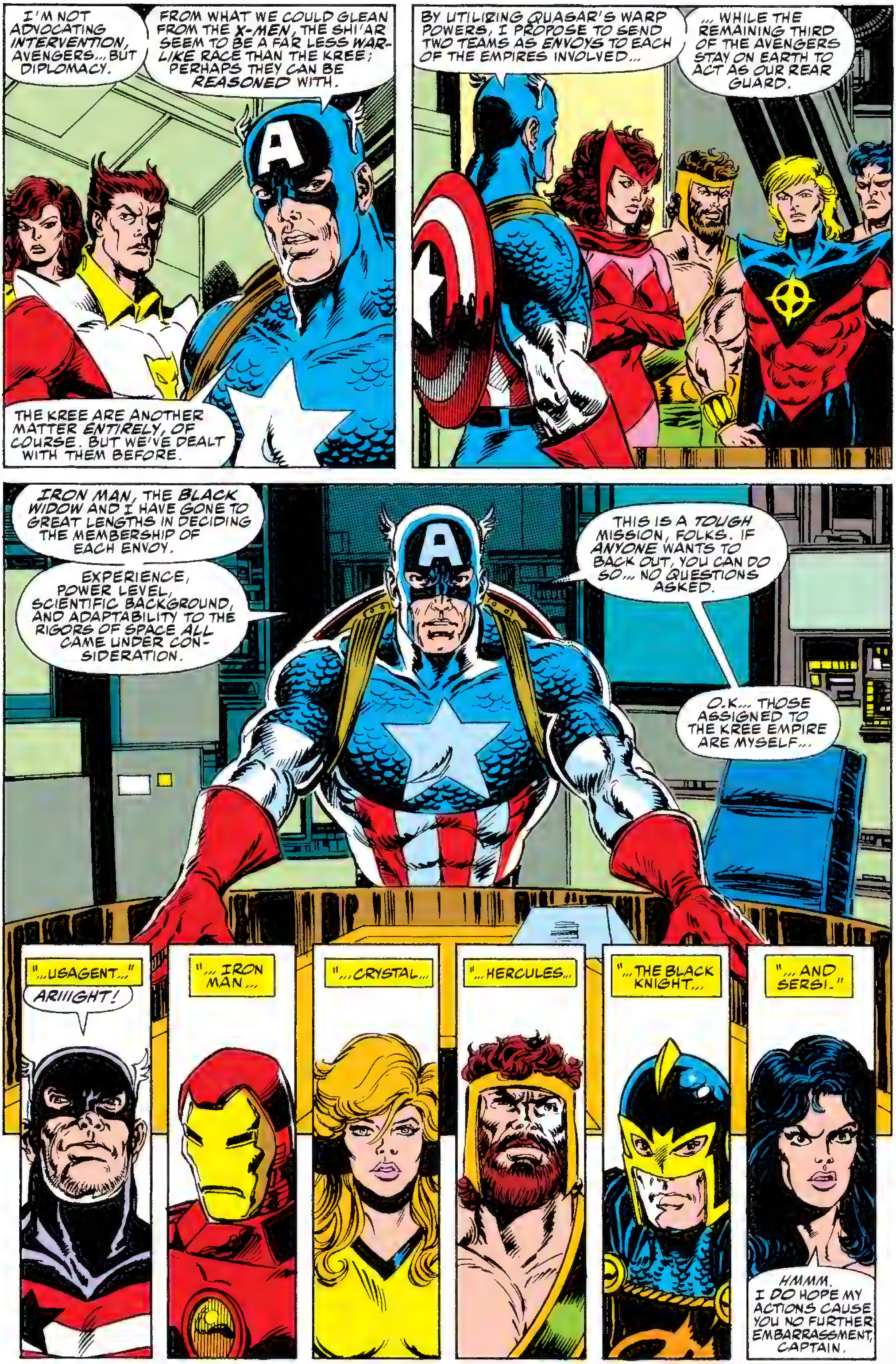

KA-TAM!
PRAETOR, THIS *CANNOT* BE HAPPENING! WE ARE THE BEST IN THE MAJESTRIX'S FLEET!
WE ARE HER PRIDE, HER *GLORY!*
ANOTHER HIT!
AH, YOUNG ONE, TODAY YOU EXPERIENCE THE *BITTER* SIDE OF LIFE.
NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE, YOU WILL *ALWAYS* MEET SOMEONE STRONGER STILL. AND PRIDE AND GLORY MEAN VERY *LITTLE* THEN.
I PRAY IT IS A LESSON OUR EMPIRE IS SPARED.
THAT'S IT, SERSI!
WE BREACHED THE FORCE FIELD!
OF COURSE. STILL, THEY'RE DOWN... BUT NOT YET *OUT,* QUASAR.
LET US MOVE IN FOR THE *KILL.*
KILL--? YOU'RE SOUNDING A LITTLE BLOODTHIRSTY THERE. THAT'S NOT YOUR STYLE.
ISN'T IT? WHAT DO YOU *REALLY* KNOW OF THE MIND OF AN ETERNAL?
AND DOES MY ATTITUDE *FRIGHTEN* YOU, WENDELL VAUGHN?

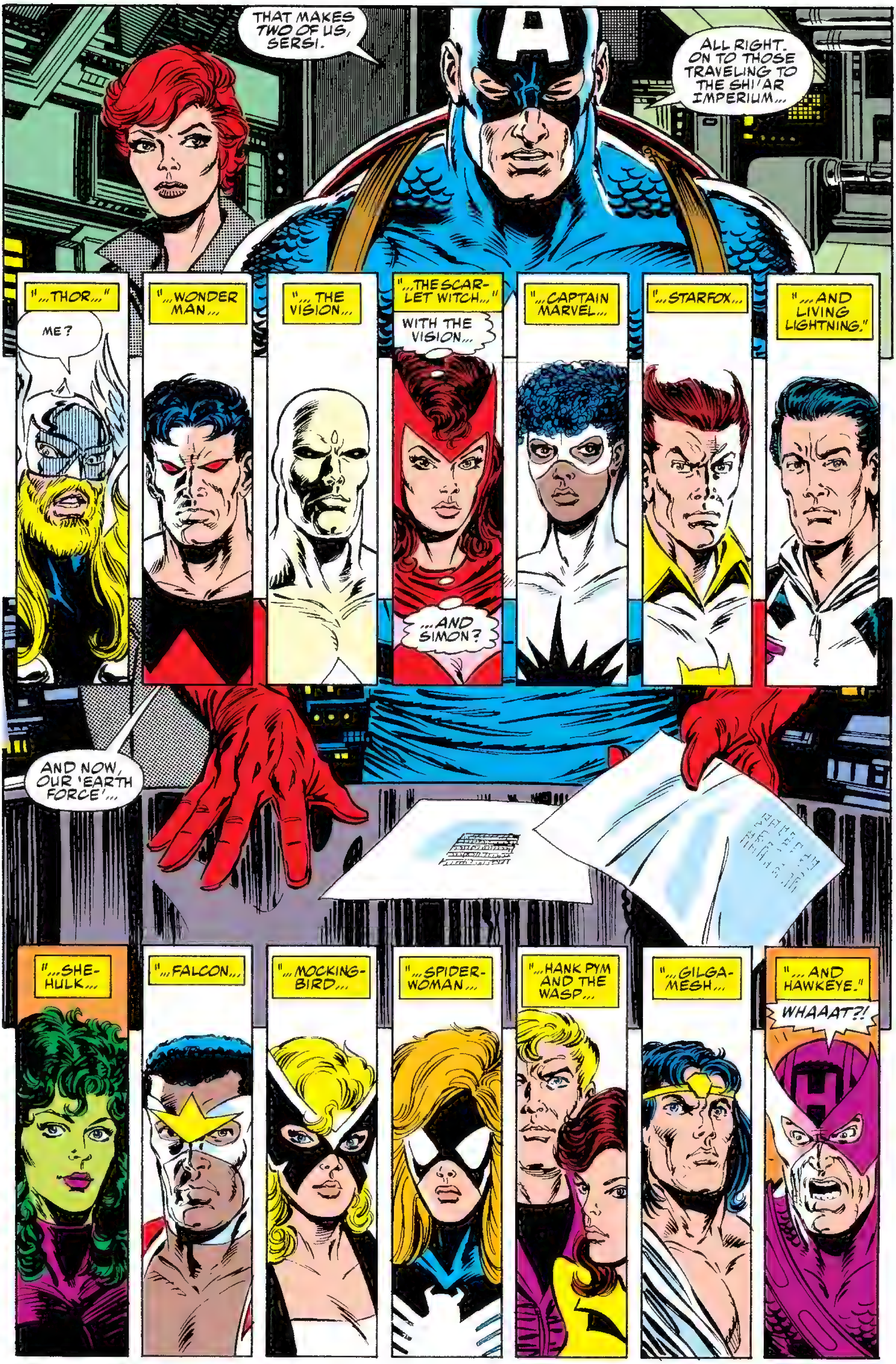

"BETTER BY FAR, IT TERRIFIES THE CREATURES WITHIN THAT SHIP!"
PRAETOR, LIFE SUPPORT IS FAILING! WE ARE *DONE!*
WHERE IS THE COMMANDER? IS HE *HIDING* FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTIONS?
ACTUALLY, YES, OLD MAN.
MY PEOPLE'S INTELLIGENCE SUGGESTED THE TERRANS WE ENCOUNTERED OUT HERE MIGHT BE THE METAHUMANS WHO HAVE *STYMIED* OUR RACE FOR SO LONG.
NOW THEY HINDER *YOU*, SHI'AR. AND TO THINK... *ALL* BECAUSE OF MY *'DEDICATION'* TO DUTY.
I'VE A BITTER LESSON FOR *YOU*, MY PRAETOR ... THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM.
NO, REALITY IS ALL SMOKE AND MIRRORS...
...AND WHO KNOWS THAT *BETTER* THAN *HOBGOBLIN* OF YOUR PRECIOUS MAJESTIX *LILANDRA'S* IMPERIAL GUARD?
BY THE M'KRANN!
PRAY TO YOUR ANCESTORS, BROTHERS... OUR HULL IS BREACHED! WE'LL NOT SEE OUR HOMEWORLD AGAIN!
KA-KASKK!
ARE THESE TERRANS *MAD?* DO THESE BARBARIANS MEAN TO--
--KILL US?
WHOOSH
ALERT! ALERT! SHIP'S INTEGRITY HAS BEEN COMPROMISED!
BREET BREET
ATMOSPHERIC DECOMPRESSION IN BRIDGE SECTION!

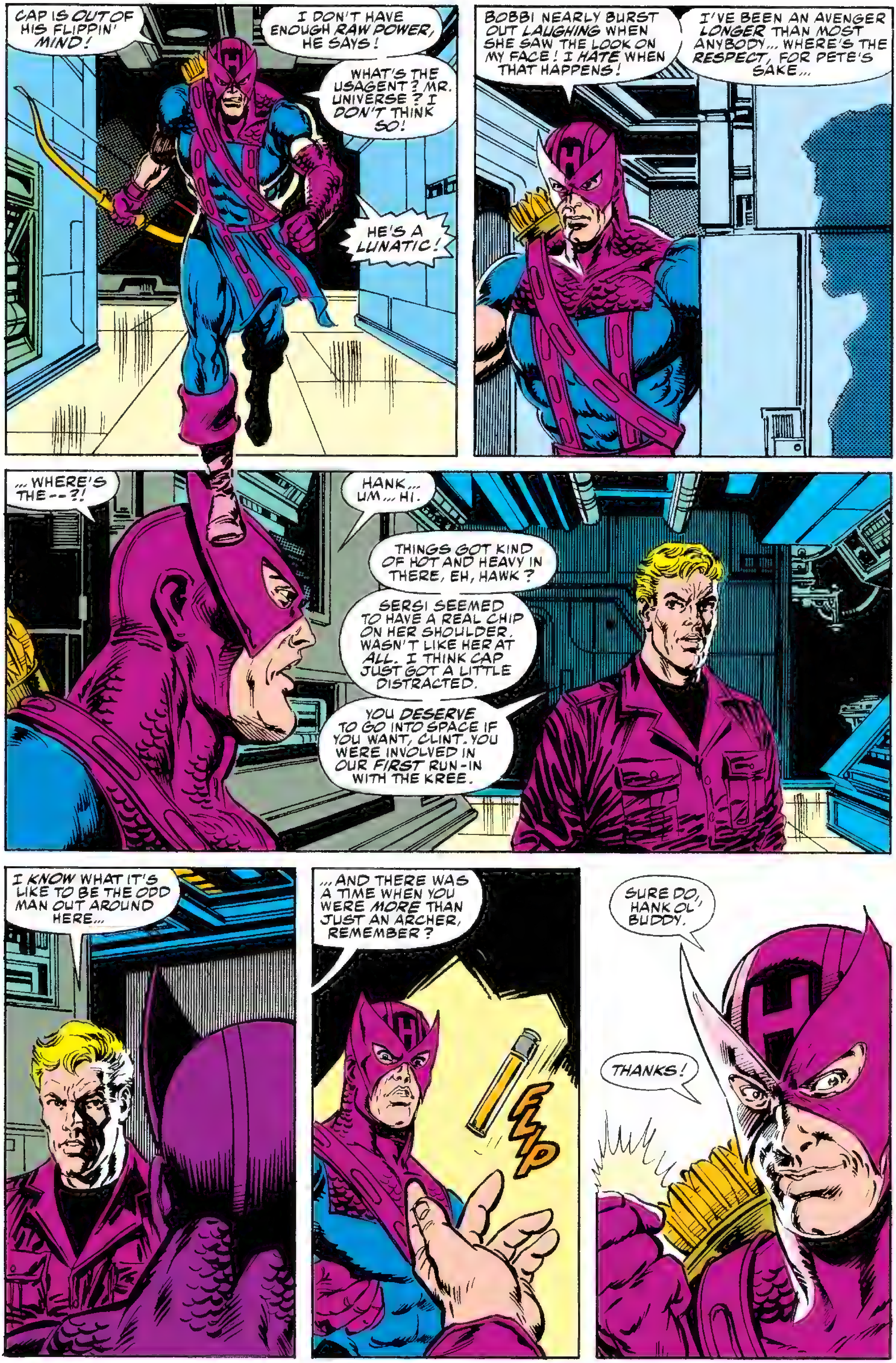

INTEGRITY RESTORED.
ATMOSPHERE RETURNING TO NORMAL PARAMETERS.
PRAETOR, WE WERE DEAD MEN!
HOW--?
SIMPLE.
THE AVENGERS GIVETH, AND THE AVENGERS TAKETH AWAY.
I SEE YOU ARE SHI'AR. I AM THE VISION OF THE AVENGERS.
YOU ATTACKED OUR PARTY UNPROVOKED WHILE WE WERE ENGAGED ON A RESCUE MISSION. SUCH ACTS, WHICH VIOLATE THE NORM OF CIVILIZED BEHAVIOR, CANNOT GO UNPUNISHED.
WE BLASTED A HOLE IN THE SIDE OF YOUR SHIP, AND I'M PLUGGING IT UP ...FOR NOW.
BE INFORMED WE INTEND TO BRING YOU TO EARTH TO INVESTIGATE RECENT EVENTS ON OUR PLANET WHICH SUGGEST YOU ARE INFRINGING ON OUR SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEED, COULD BE A THREAT TO OUR VERY SURVIVAL.
I AM PRAETOR OF THIS VESSEL. YOU ARE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO GREAT POWERS, FOR WHICH I APOLOGIZE.
YOUR ANGER IS JUSTIFIED, BUT NO PRAETOR OF THE SHI'AR HAS EVER ALLOWED HIS SHIP TO BE TAKEN.
THEN MAKE HISTORY AND BE THE FIRST, PRAETOR...
...OR BY ZURAS, I SWEAR, WE'LL DESTROY YOU AND YOUR SHIP!

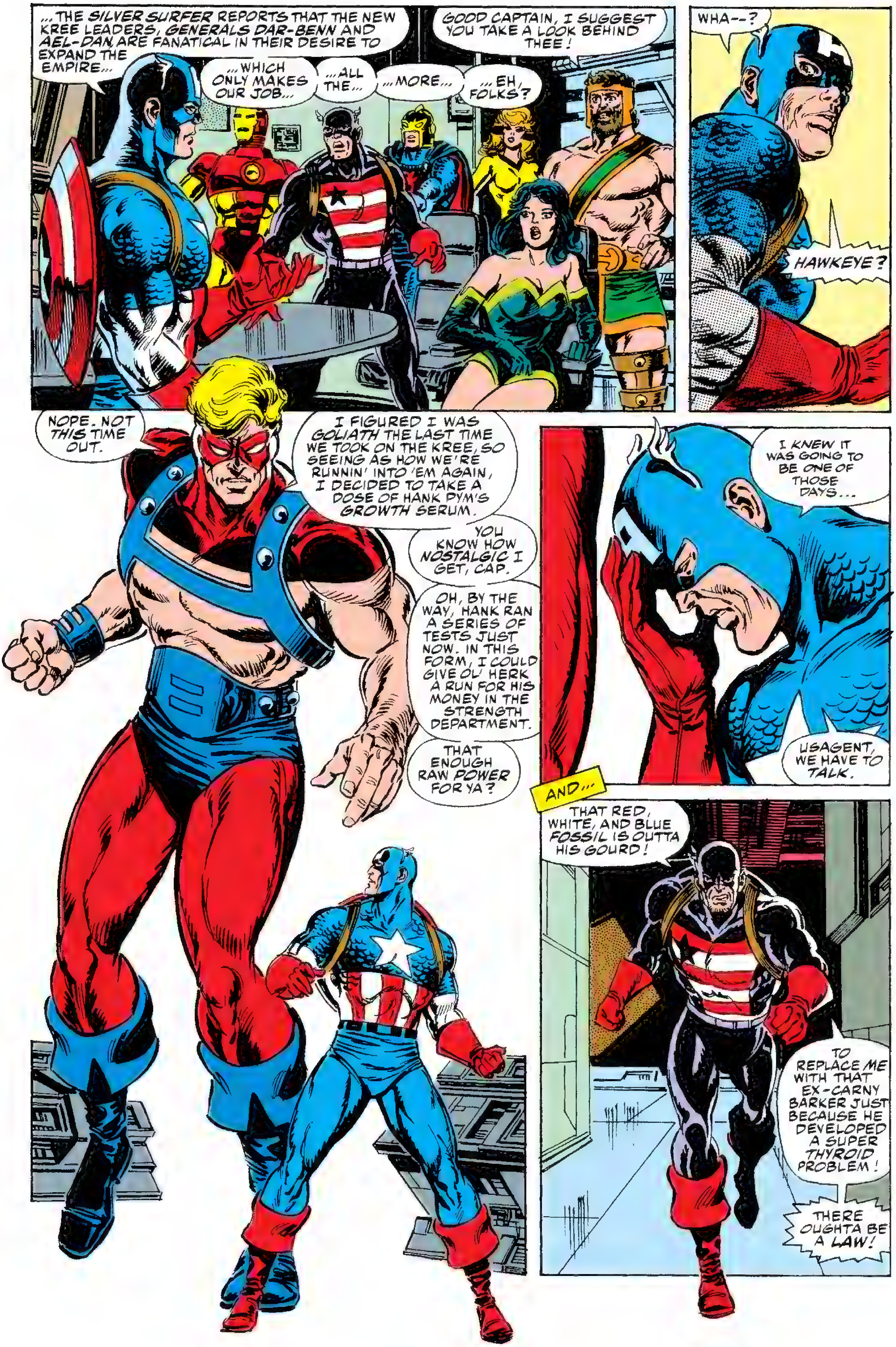

YOU WHAT?!
YOU THREATENED TO KILL THEM?! GOOD LORD, THE AVENGERS DON'T OPERATE THAT WAY, LADY!
THEN PERHAPS THEY SHOULD, CAPTAIN! AND WITH ALL OF US HERE, BOTH EAST AND WEST... MAYBE WE SHOULD VOTE ON IT!
WE WERE OUT IN DEEP SPACE, HAVING JUST SURVIVED AN ATTACK ON NOT ONLY US BUT THE STARCORE SCIENTISTS WE WERE ENTRUSTED TO SAVE!
FORGIVE US, WON'T YOU, IF WE NEGLECTED ROBERTS RULES OF CONDUCT! BUT I HARDLY THINK THE SHI'AR WOULD HAVE EXTENDED US THE SAME COURTESY.
CAP, I KNOW I'M THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK, BUT WE WERE FIGHTING A FULLY-ARMED BATTLESHIP, AND IT WAS JUST A BLUFF...
...WASN'T IT?
I'M NOT ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE WITH WHAT WE DID, CAP...
...BUT CORBEAU AND HIS CREW ARE BACK HOME AND WE GOT SOME CAPTIVES WE CAN QUESTION OUT OF THE DEAL. I SAY WE CAME OUT AHEAD.
THEN I ASK YOU ALL... IF THE SHI'AR PRAETOR HAD NOT GIVEN UP...
...WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO CARRY OUT YOUR THREAT?
DUMDEDUMDUM! A HEAVY PAUSE.
I LOVE IT! DISSENTION IN THE RANKS!
BUTTON IT, AGENT. CAP KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKIN' ABOUT!
BUTTON IT YOURSELF, BARTON! I GOT EVERY RIGHT TO TALK.
AFTER ALL, THE AVENGERS ARE ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY, RIGHT?
CAP, WHATEVER THE ETHICS OF WHAT HAPPENED, WE NOW HAVE SEVERAL DOZEN PRISONERS FROM THE STAR VESSEL AS WELL AS THE KREE DR. MINERVA AND CAPTAIN ATLAS...
...WHOM I SHRANK IN SIZE AND PLACED IN THIS HOLDING TANK.
HANK, THAT MAKES ME EQUALLY UNCOMFORTABLE! IT REMINDS ME OF OUR OLD FRIEND, THE COLLECTOR!
THAT'S HARDLY FAIR, CAP!
IRON MAN REQUESTED HANK REDUCE THE ALIENS. AFTER ALL, WHAT WERE WE GOING TO DO WITH THEM?
WHAT, INDEED?
ALL I'M URGING IS CAUTION, WASP. IT'S A SLIPPERY, MUDDY ROAD ONCE YOU BEGIN MAKING DEATH THREATS AND INCARCERATING PEOPLE...
...AND I DON'T WANT TO SEE THE AVENGERS... DESPITE THE BEST OF INTENTIONS... GET CAUGHT IN THE MUCK.

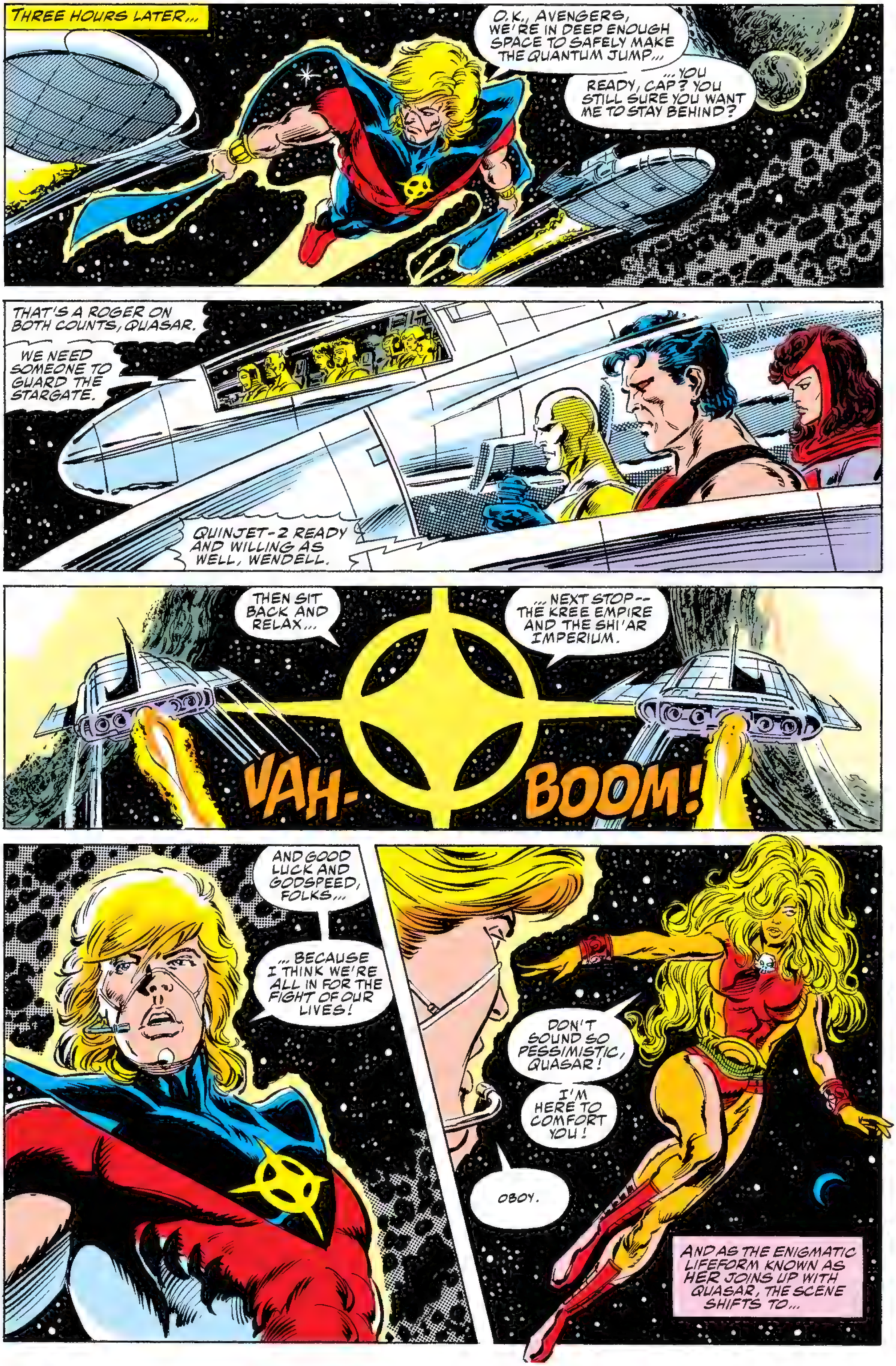

DEBATE IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, MY FRIENDS...
...BUT SHOULDN'T WE ATTEND TO THE MATTER AT HAND?
YOU'RE RIGHT, 'TASHA...
...SORRY, HANK. I WAS WAY OUT OF LINE.
'S O.K., CAP.
WE'RE ALL UNDER STRESS.
NOW WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS SITUATION?
WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SUGGEST MAY SEEM AS QUIXOTIC AS FIGHTING WINDMILLS...
...BECAUSE ADMITTEDLY, OUR COMBINED ABILITIES ARE NEXT TO NOTHING AGAINST POWERS AS VAST AS THE KREE AND SHI'AR EMPIRES...
...BUT SOMEHOW, WE'VE GOT TO CONVINCE THESE TWO ANCIENT RACES TO STOP THIS WAR BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND.
BUT WHY?
I MEAN, WHO ARE WE TO GO AROUND TELLING OTHER PEOPLE... OR ALIENS... HOW TO RUN THEIR AFFAIRS?
WHAT, HAVE YOU BEEN OUT TO LUNCH OR SOMETHING, BOBBI?
THERE'S THE LITTLE MATTER REGARDIN' OUR SUN.
HAWKEYE IS CORRECT, MOCKINGBIRD.
BOTH THE SHI'AR AND THE KREE ARE USING THE SUN AS AN ENERGY SOURCE IN ORDER TO ACTIVATE A NORMALLY INERT WORMHOLE.
THIS PORTAL, ONCE OPEN, SERVES AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THEIR RESPECTIVE GALAXIES, CUTTING THE DISTANCE THEIR SPACE FLEETS MUST TRAVEL TO A MERE FRACTION.
HOWEVER, USE OF THE WORMHOLE CAUSES GRAVIMETRIC HAVOC WITH THE SUN, DESTABILIZING ITS NUCLEAR COHESION.
IF THE KREE AND SHI'AR ARE NOT STOPPED, THE SUN WILL NOVA. AND LIFE IN THIS SOLAR SYSTEM WILL CEASE.
THAT'S WHY CAP SAYS WE HAVE TO GET INVOLVED.
I HOPE THE KREE DON'T THINK WE'RE TOO RUDE BUTTING INTO THEIR BUSINESS.
OH--STOP SMIRKING, CLINT.
WHILE WE WERE MARRIED, I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS YOUR LEAST BECOMING HABIT.

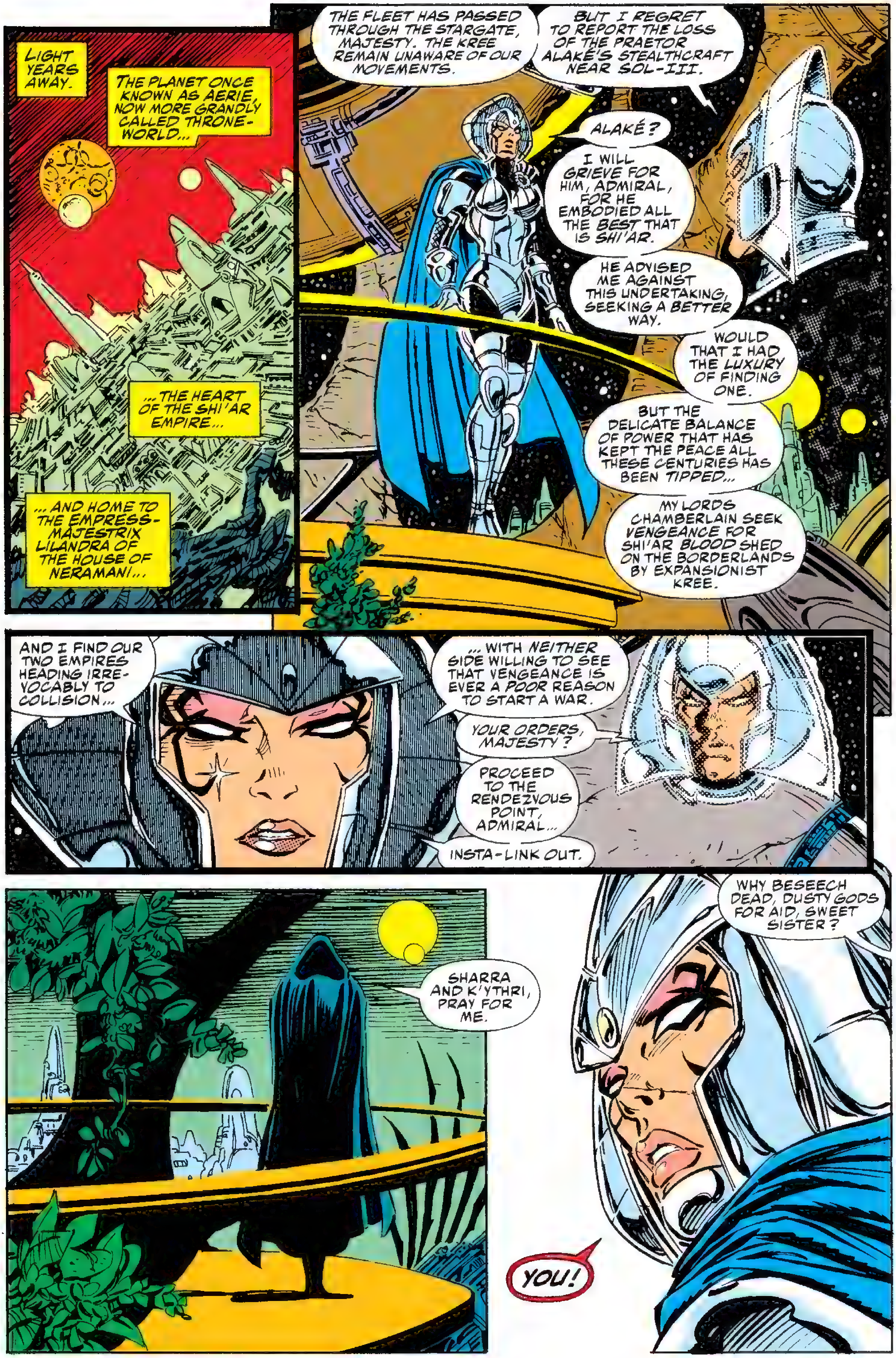

I'M NOT ADVOCATING *INTERVENTION*, AVENGERS... BUT DIPLOMACY.
FROM WHAT WE COULD GLEAN FROM THE *X-MEN*, THE SHI'AR SEEM TO BE A FAR LESS *WAR-LIKE* RACE THAN THE KREE; PERHAPS THEY CAN BE *REASONED* WITH.
THE KREE ARE ANOTHER MATTER *ENTIRELY*, OF COURSE. BUT WE'VE DEALT WITH THEM BEFORE.
BY UTILIZING *QUASAR'S* WARP POWERS, I PROPOSE TO SEND TWO TEAMS AS *ENVOYS* TO EACH OF THE EMPIRES INVOLVED...
... WHILE THE REMAINING THIRD OF THE AVENGERS STAY ON EARTH TO ACT AS OUR REAR GUARD.
IRON MAN, THE *BLACK WIDOW* AND I HAVE GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS IN DECIDING THE MEMBERSHIP OF EACH ENVOY.
EXPERIENCE, POWER LEVEL, SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND, AND ADAPTABILITY TO THE RIGORS OF SPACE *ALL* CAME UNDER CONSIDERATION.
THIS IS A *TOUGH* MISSION, FOLKS. IF *ANYONE* WANTS TO BACK OUT, YOU CAN DO SO... NO QUESTIONS ASKED.
O.K... THOSE ASSIGNED TO THE KREE EMPIRE ARE MYSELF...
"...USAGENT..."
ARIIIGHT!
"... IRON MAN..."
"...CRYSTAL..."
"...HERCULES..."
"...THE BLACK KNIGHT..."
"... AND SERSI."
HMMM. I *DO* HOPE MY ACTIONS CAUSE YOU NO FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT, CAPTAIN.

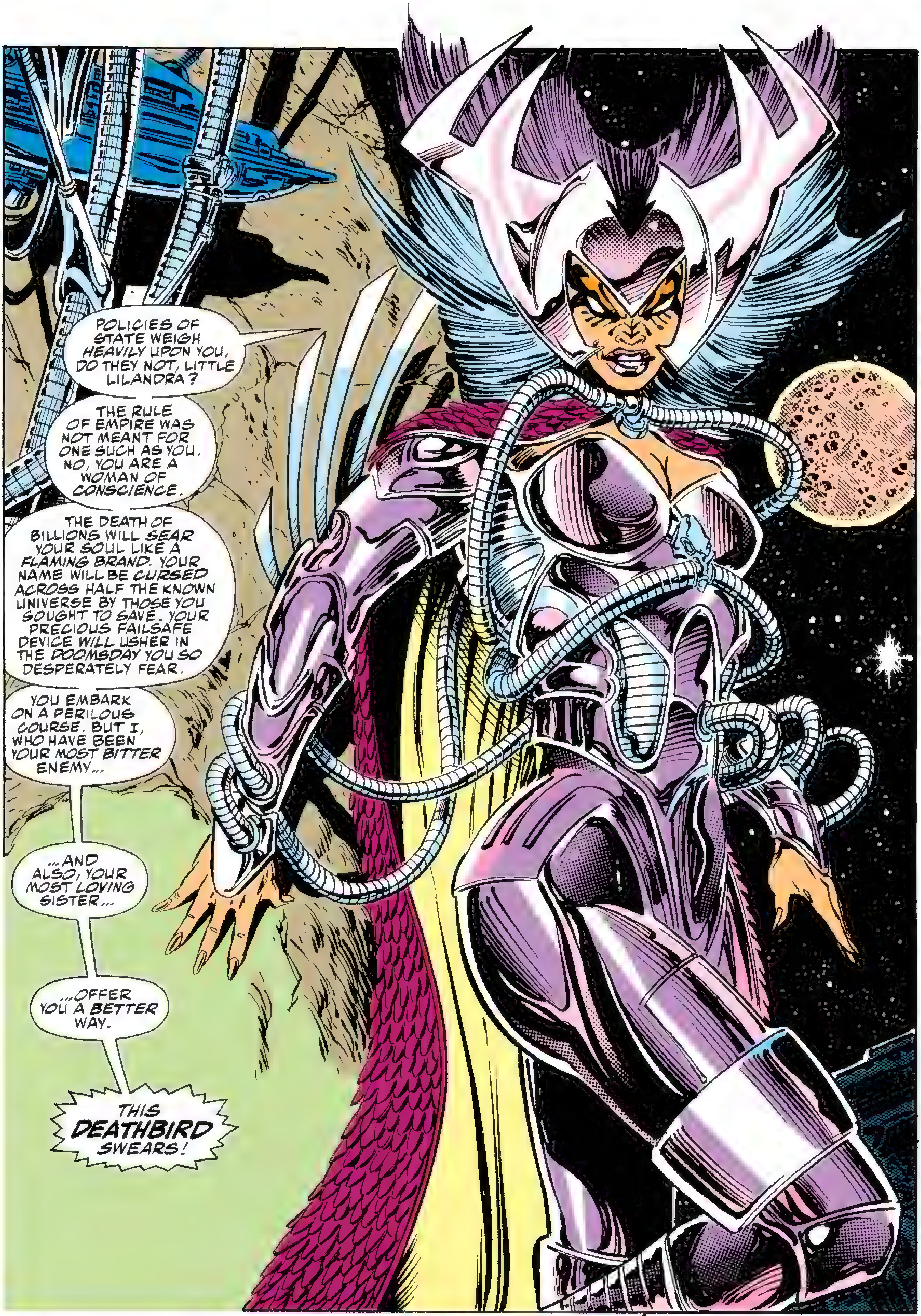

THAT MAKES TWO OF US, SERSI.
ALL RIGHT. ON TO THOSE TRAVELING TO THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM...
"...THOR..."
ME?
"...WONDER MAN...
"...THE VISION...
"...THE SCARLET WITCH..."
WITH THE VISION...
...AND SIMON?
"...CAPTAIN MARVEL...
"...STARFOX...
"...AND LIVING LIGHTNING."
AND NOW, OUR 'EARTH FORCE'...
"...SHE-HULK...
"...FALCON...
"...MOCKINGBIRD...
"...SPIDER-WOMAN...
"...HANK PYM AND THE WASP...
"...GILGAMESH...
"...AND HAWKEYE."
WHAAAT?!


CAP IS *OUT* OF HIS FLIPPIN' *MIND*!
I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH *RAW POWER*, HE SAYS!
WHAT'S THE USAGENT? MR. UNIVERSE? I *DON'T* THINK SO!
HE'S A *LUNATIC*!
BOBBI NEARLY BURST OUT *LAUGHING* WHEN SHE SAW THE LOOK ON MY FACE! I *HATE* WHEN THAT HAPPENS!
I'VE BEEN AN AVENGER *LONGER* THAN *MOST* ANYBODY... WHERE'S THE *RESPECT*, FOR PETE'S SAKE...
...WHERE'S THE--?!
HANK... UM... HI.
THINGS GOT KIND OF HOT AND HEAVY IN THERE, EH, HAWK?
SERSI SEEMED TO HAVE A REAL CHIP ON HER SHOULDER. WASN'T LIKE HER AT *ALL*. I THINK CAP JUST GOT A LITTLE DISTRACTED.
YOU *DESERVE* TO GO INTO SPACE IF YOU WANT, CLINT. YOU WERE INVOLVED IN OUR *FIRST* RUN-IN WITH THE KREE.
I *KNOW* WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE ODD MAN OUT AROUND HERE...
...AND THERE WAS A TIME WHEN YOU WERE *MORE* THAN JUST AN ARCHER, REMEMBER?
FLIP
SURE DO, HANK OL' BUDDY.
THANKS!


...THE SILVER SURFER REPORTS THAT THE NEW KREE LEADERS, GENERALS DAR-BENN AND AEL-DAN, ARE FANATICAL IN THEIR DESIRE TO EXPAND THE EMPIRE...
...WHICH ONLY MAKES OUR JOB...
...ALL THE...
...MORE...
...EH, FOLKS?
GOOD CAPTAIN, I SUGGEST YOU TAKE A LOOK BEHIND THEE!
WHA--?
HAWKEYE?
NOPE. NOT THIS TIME OUT.
I FIGURED I WAS GOLIATH THE LAST TIME WE TOOK ON THE KREE, SO SEEING AS HOW WE'RE RUNNIN' INTO 'EM AGAIN, I DECIDED TO TAKE A DOSE OF HANK PYM'S GROWTH SERUM.
YOU KNOW HOW NOSTALGIC I GET, CAP.
OH, BY THE WAY, HANK RAN A SERIES OF TESTS JUST NOW. IN THIS FORM, I COULD GIVE OL' HERK A RUN FOR HIS MONEY IN THE STRENGTH DEPARTMENT.
THAT ENOUGH RAW POWER FOR YA?
I KNEW IT WAS GOING TO BE ONE OF THOSE DAYS...
USAGENT, WE HAVE TO TALK.
AND...
THAT RED, WHITE, AND BLUE FOSSIL IS OUTTA HIS GOURD!
TO REPLACE ME WITH THAT EX-CARNY BARKER JUST BECAUSE HE DEVELOPED A SUPER THYROID PROBLEM!
THERE OUGHTA BE A LAW!


THREE HOURS LATER...
O.K., AVENGERS, WE'RE IN DEEP ENOUGH SPACE TO SAFELY MAKE THE QUANTUM JUMP...
...YOU READY, CAP? YOU STILL SURE YOU WANT ME TO STAY BEHIND?
THAT'S A ROGER ON BOTH COUNTS, QUASAR.
WE NEED SOMEONE TO GUARD THE STARGATE.
QUINJET-2 READY AND WILLING AS WELL, WENDELL.
THEN SIT BACK AND RELAX...
...NEXT STOP--THE KREE EMPIRE AND THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM.
VAH-BOOM!
AND GOOD LUCK AND GODSPEED, FOLKS...
...BECAUSE I THINK WE'RE ALL IN FOR THE FIGHT OF OUR LIVES!
DON'T SOUND SO PESSIMISTIC, QUASAR!
I'M HERE TO COMFORT YOU!
OBOY.
AND AS THE ENIGMATIC LIFEFORM KNOWN AS HER JOINS UP WITH QUASAR, THE SCENE SHIFTS TO...


LIGHT YEARS AWAY.
THE PLANET ONCE KNOWN AS AERIE, NOW MORE GRANDLY CALLED THRONE-WORLD...
...THE HEART OF THE SHI'AR EMPIRE...
...AND HOME TO THE EMPRESS-MAJESTRIX LILANDRA OF THE HOUSE OF NERAMANI...
THE FLEET HAS PASSED THROUGH THE STARGATE, MAJESTY. THE KREE REMAIN UNAWARE OF OUR MOVEMENTS.
BUT I REGRET TO REPORT THE LOSS OF THE PRAETOR ALAKÉ'S STEALTHCRAFT NEAR SOL-III.
ALAKÉ?
I WILL GRIEVE FOR HIM, ADMIRAL, FOR HE EMBODIED ALL THE BEST THAT IS SHI'AR.
HE ADVISED ME AGAINST THIS UNDERTAKING, SEEKING A BETTER WAY.
WOULD THAT I HAD THE LUXURY OF FINDING ONE.
BUT THE DELICATE BALANCE OF POWER THAT HAS KEPT THE PEACE ALL THESE CENTURIES HAS BEEN TIPPED...
MY LORDS CHAMBERLAIN SEEK VENGEANCE FOR SHI'AR BLOOD SHED ON THE BORDERLANDS BY EXPANSIONIST KREE.
AND I FIND OUR TWO EMPIRES HEADING IRREVOCABLY TO COLLISION...
...WITH NEITHER SIDE WILLING TO SEE THAT VENGEANCE IS EVER A POOR REASON TO START A WAR.
YOUR ORDERS, MAJESTY?
PROCEED TO THE RENDEZVOUS POINT, ADMIRAL...
INSTA-LINK OUT.
SHARRA AND K'YTHRI, PRAY FOR ME.
WHY BESEECH DEAD, DUSTY GODS FOR AID, SWEET SISTER?
YOU!


POLICIES OF STATE WEIGH HEAVILY UPON YOU, DO THEY NOT, LITTLE LILANDRA?
THE RULE OF EMPIRE WAS NOT MEANT FOR ONE SUCH AS YOU. NO, YOU ARE A WOMAN OF CONSCIENCE.
THE DEATH OF BILLIONS WILL SEAR YOUR SOUL LIKE A FLAMING BRAND. YOUR NAME WILL BE CURSED ACROSS HALF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE BY THOSE YOU SOUGHT TO SAVE. YOUR PRECIOUS FAILSAFE DEVICE WILL USHER IN THE DOOMSDAY YOU SO DESPERATELY FEAR.
YOU EMBARK ON A PERILOUS COURSE. BUT I, WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR MOST BITTER ENEMY...
...AND ALSO, YOUR MOST LOVING SISTER...
...OFFER YOU A BETTER WAY.
THIS DEATHBIRD SWEARS!

GALACTIC STORM CONTINUES IN **IRON MAN #279**... AND JOIN US HERE NEXT MONTH FOR THE **BIRTH** OF...

STAR FORCE!

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OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM™
PART 6
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02454
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
KREE MATTERS ARE NOT YOUR CONCERN, MEDDLESOME AVENGER!
RYAN / WIACEK
ONWARD TO HALA... IN THE FACE OF SHATTERAX!™

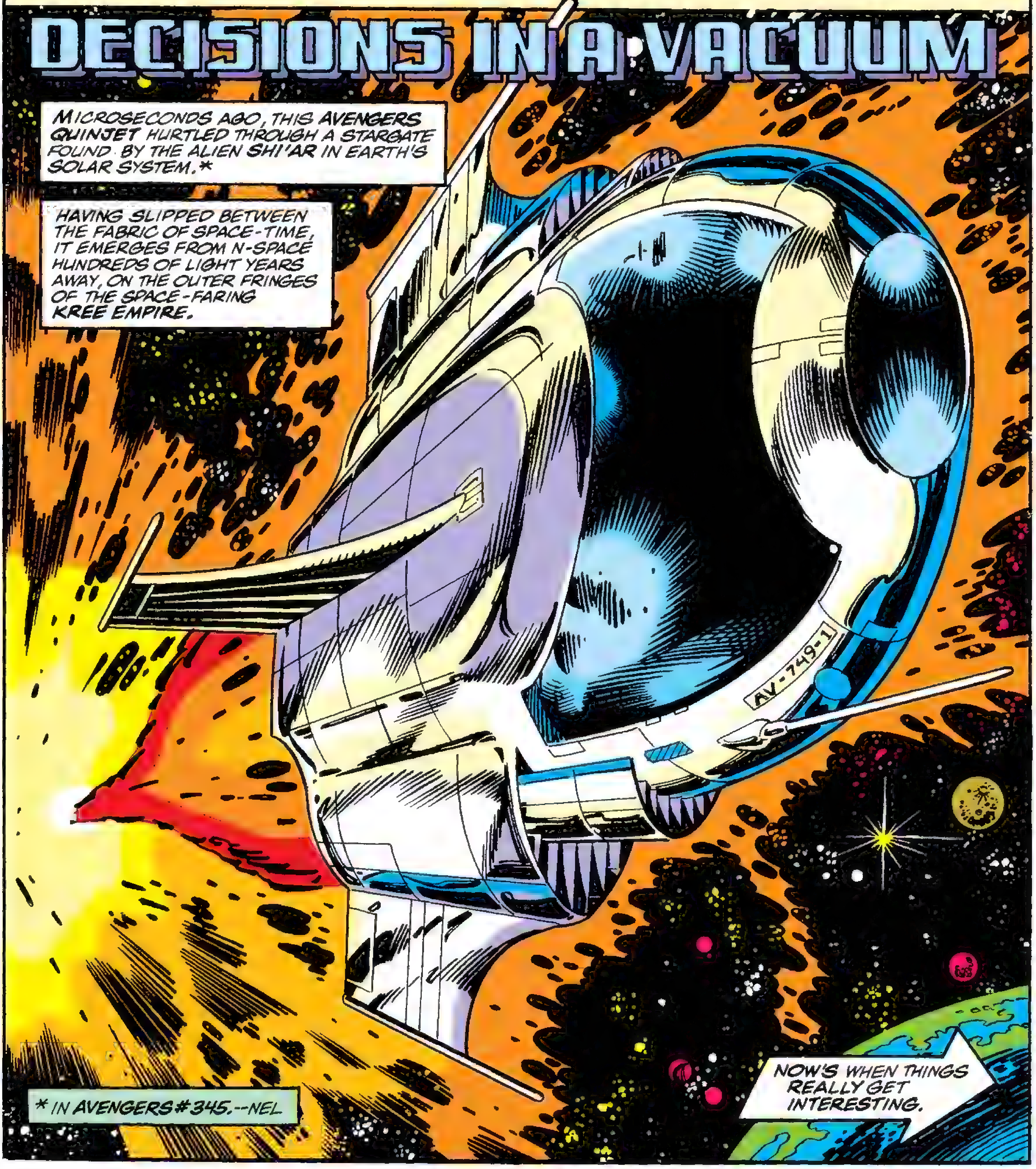
Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 6

IRON
MAN

*TWO INTERGALACTIC EMPIRES ARE AT WAR — THE MILITARISTIC KREE AND THE MATRIARCHAL **SHI'AR** — A WAR THAT THREATENS LIFE ON EARTH. THE **AVENGERS** HAVE SENT TWO ENVOYS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE HEADS OF EACH EMPIRE. IN THE CONTINGENT APPROACHING THE KREE EMPIRE — CAPTAIN AMERICA, HERCULES, SERSI, CRYSTAL, THE BLACK KNIGHT, GOLIATH, AND THE INVINCIBLE **IRON MAN!***

DECISIONS IN A VACUUM


MICROSECONDS AGO, THIS **AVENGERS QUINJET** HURTLED THROUGH A STARGATE FOUND BY THE ALIEN **SHI'AR** IN EARTH'S SOLAR SYSTEM.*
HAVING SLIPPED BETWEEN THE FABRIC OF SPACE-TIME, IT EMERGES FROM N-SPACE HUNDREDS OF LIGHT YEARS AWAY, ON THE OUTER FRINGES OF THE SPACE-FARING **KREE EMPIRE.**
AV-749-1
NOW'S WHEN THINGS **REALLY** GET INTERESTING.
*IN **AVENGERS #345.**--NEL

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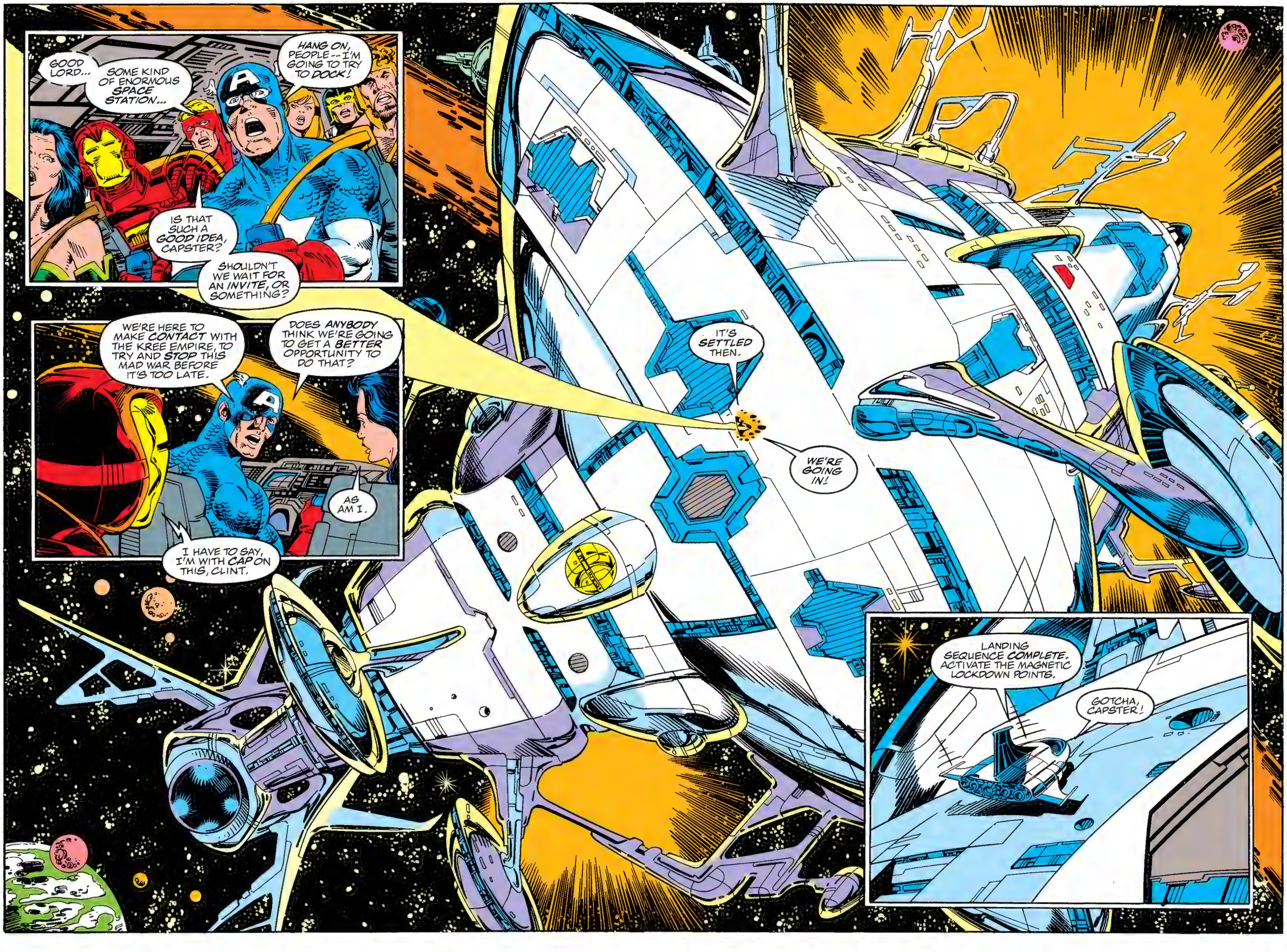
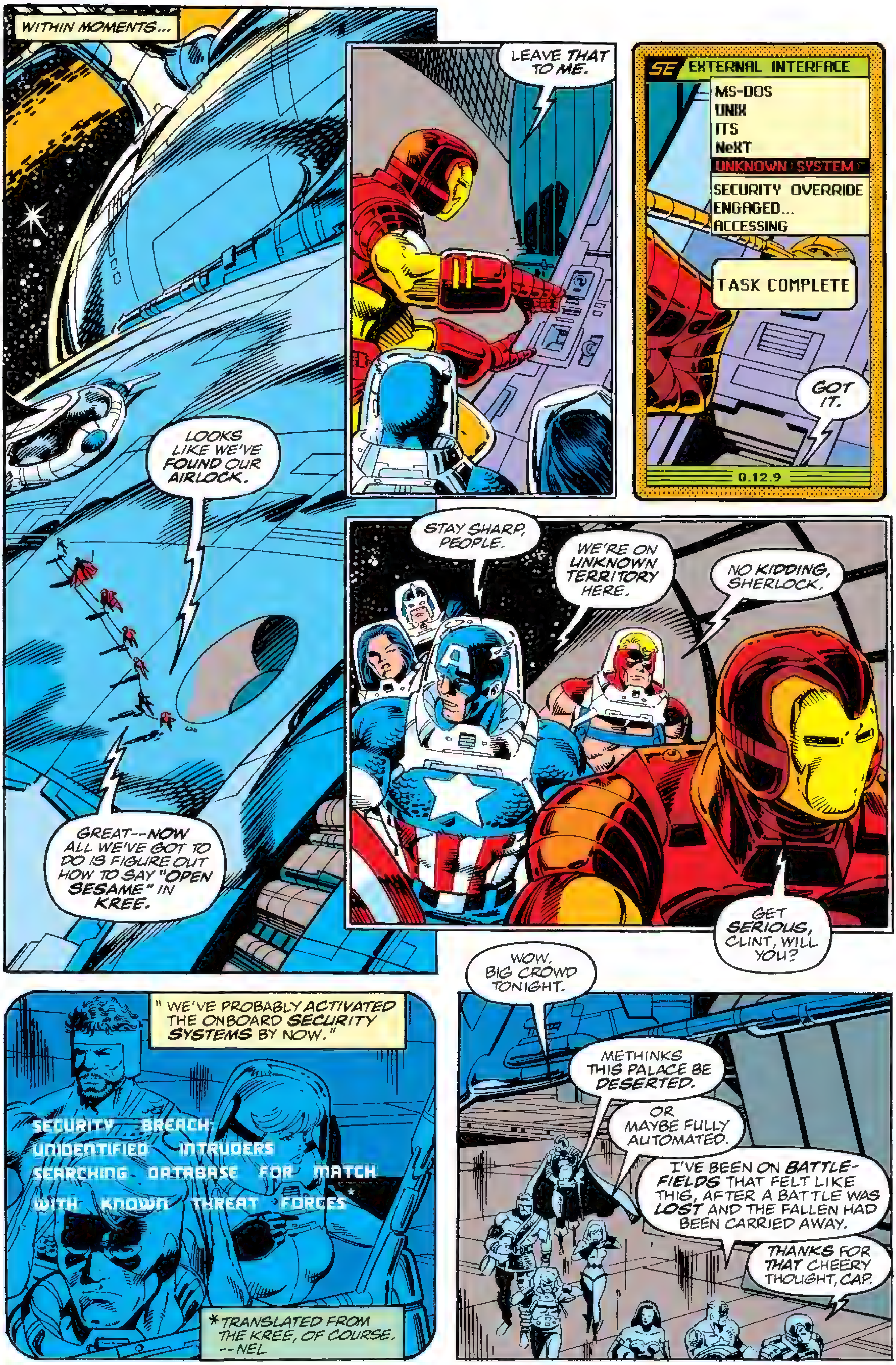
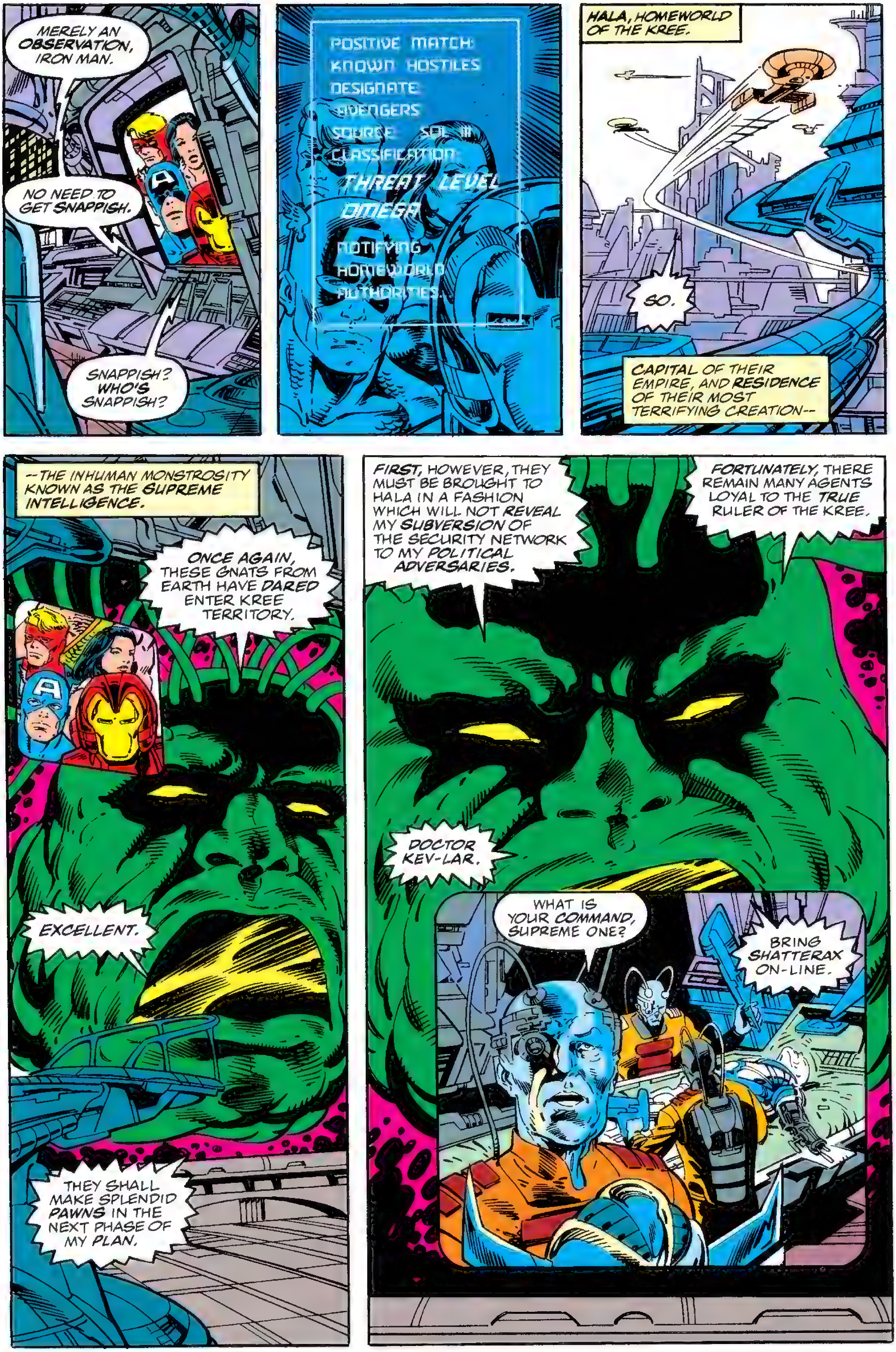
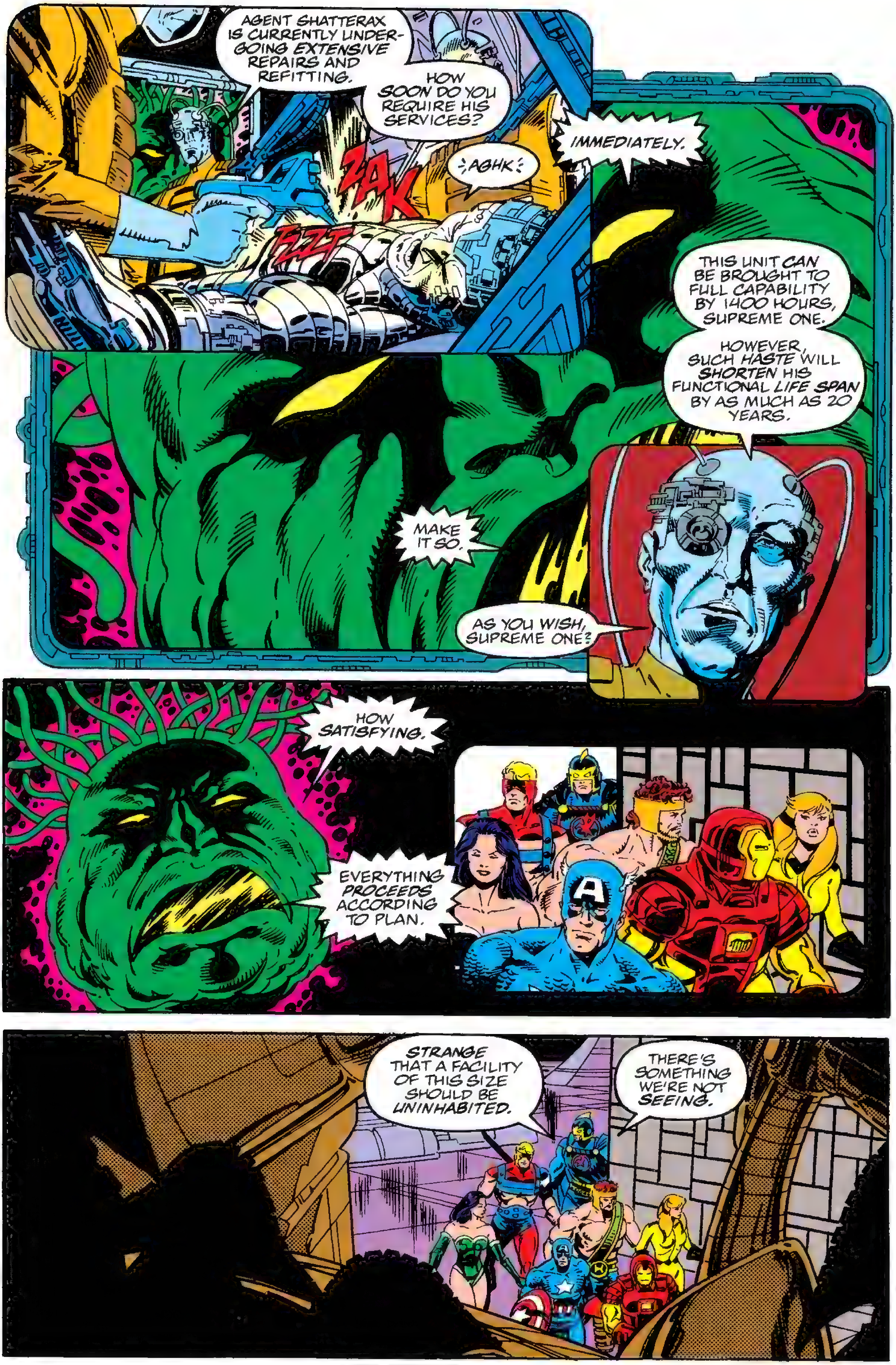
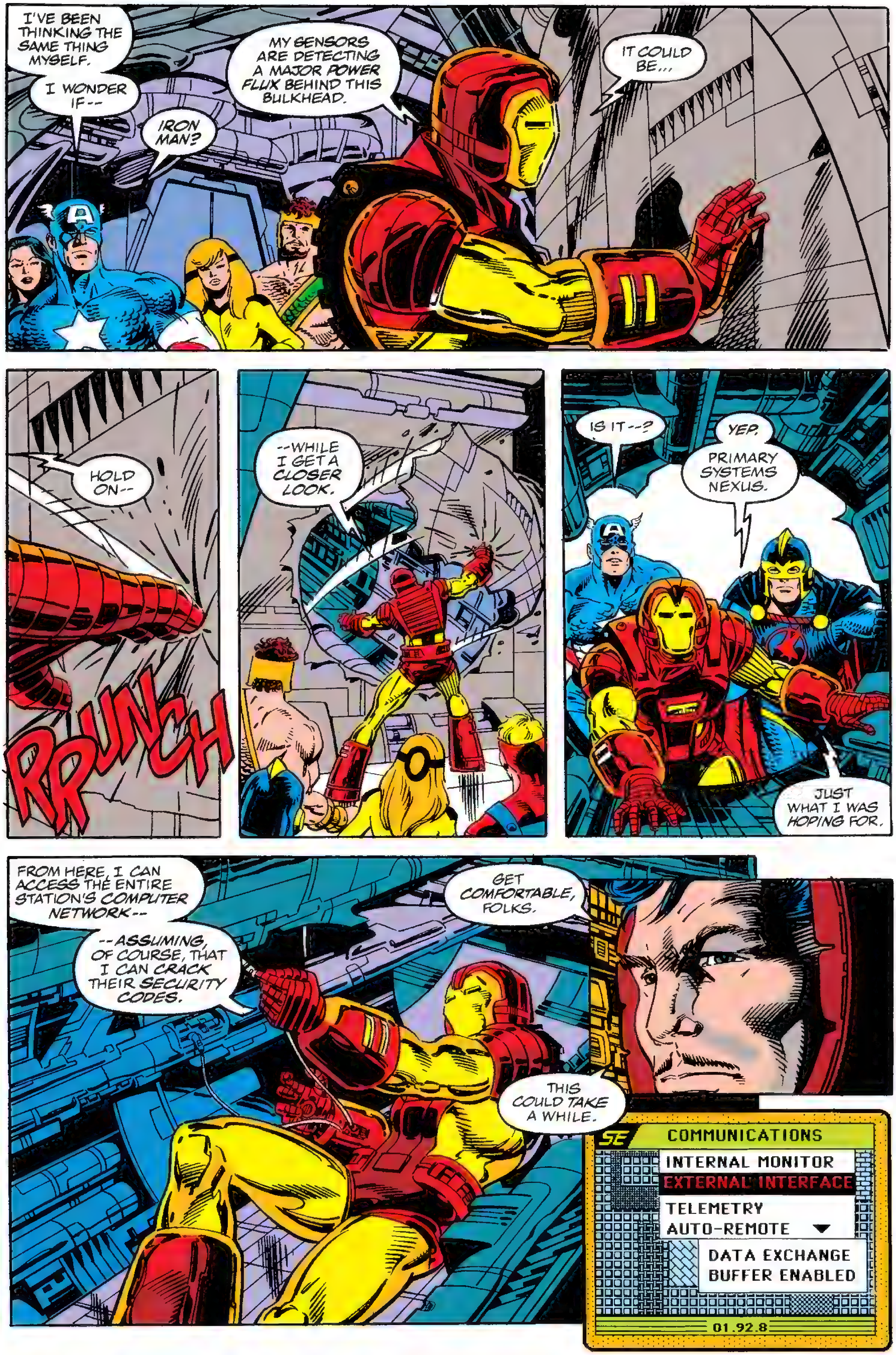
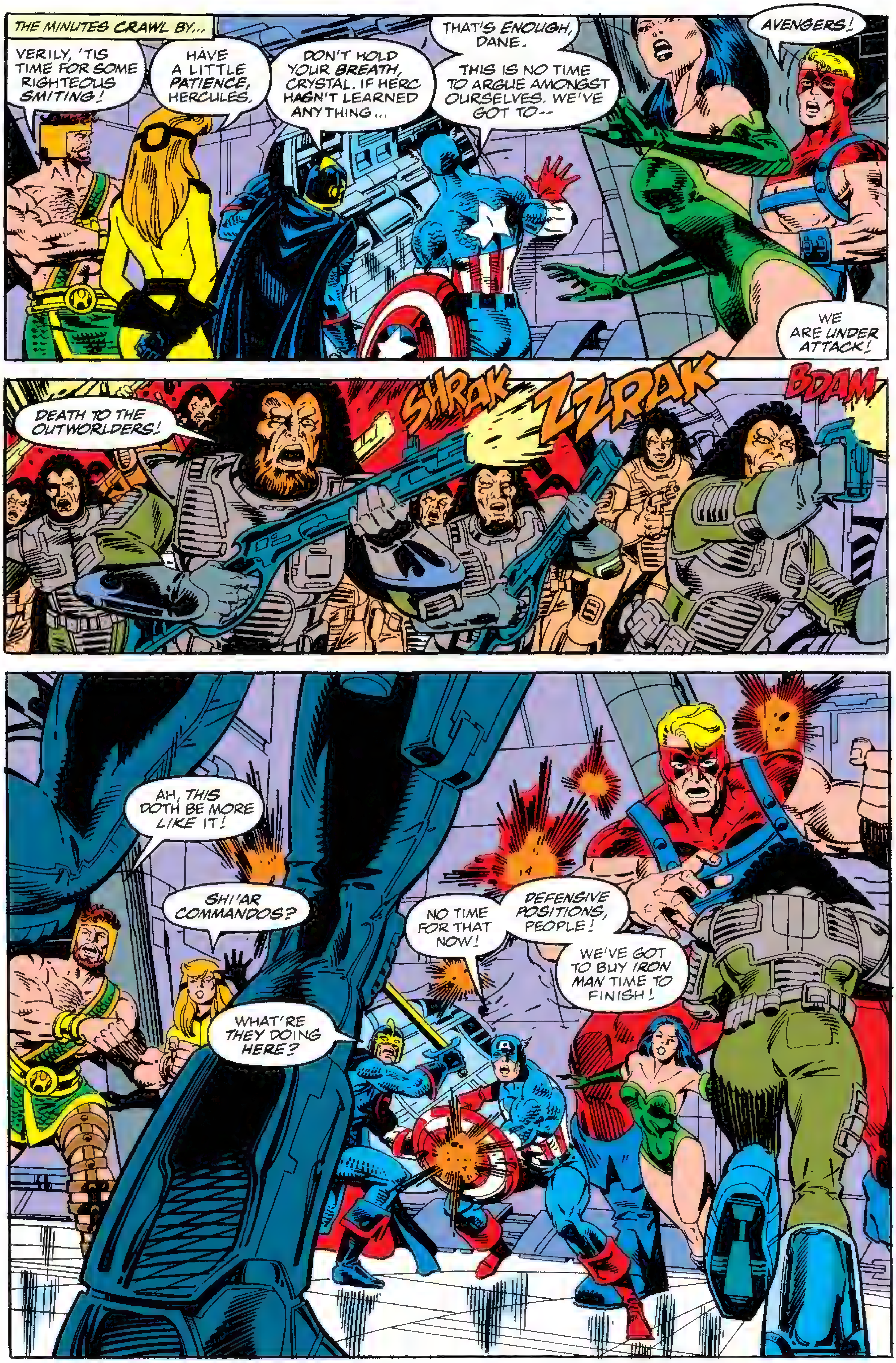

GOOD LORD...
SOME KIND OF ENORMOUS *SPACE STATION*...
HANG ON, PEOPLE -- I'M GOING TO TRY TO *DOCK*!
IS THAT SUCH A *GOOD IDEA*, CAPSTER?
SHOULDN'T WE WAIT FOR AN *INVITE*, OR SOMETHING?
WE'RE HERE TO MAKE *CONTACT* WITH THE KREE EMPIRE, TO TRY AND *STOP* THIS MAD WAR BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
DOES *ANYBODY* THINK WE'RE GOING TO GET A *BETTER* OPPORTUNITY TO DO THAT?
AS AM I.
I HAVE TO SAY, I'M WITH *CAP* ON THIS, CLINT.
IT'S *SETTLED* THEN.
WE'RE GOING IN!
LANDING SEQUENCE *COMPLETE*. ACTIVATE THE MAGNETIC LOCKDOWN POINTS.
GOTCHA, CAPSTER!

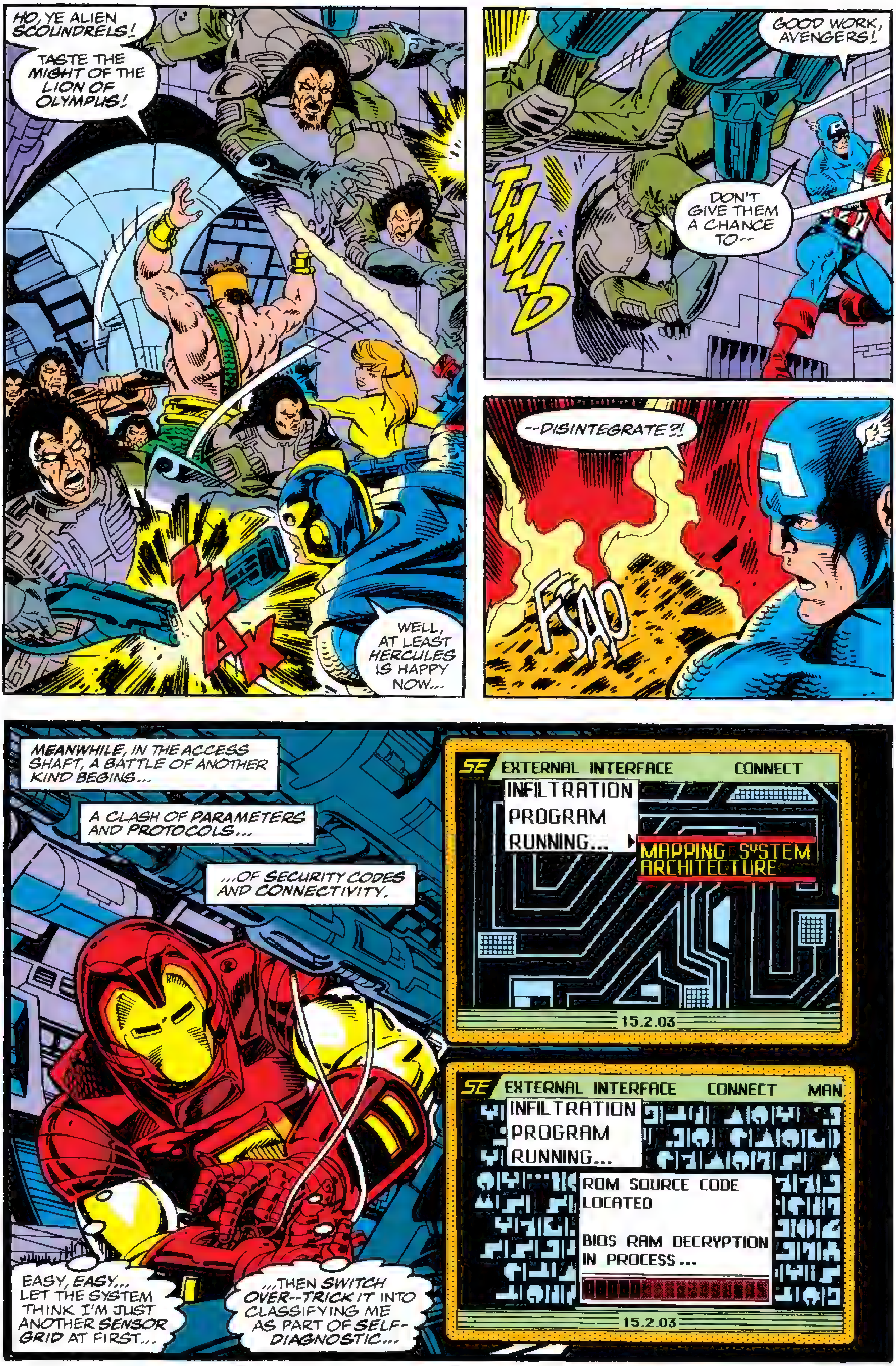

WITHIN MOMENTS...
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE FOUND OUR AIRLOCK.
GREAT--NOW ALL WE'VE GOT TO DO IS FIGURE OUT HOW TO SAY "OPEN SESAME" IN KREE.
LEAVE THAT TO ME.
SE EXTERNAL INTERFACE
MS-DOS
UNIX
ITS
NeXT
UNKNOWN SYSTEM
SECURITY OVERRIDE ENGAGED...
ACCESSING
TASK COMPLETE
GOT IT.
0.12.9
STAY SHARP, PEOPLE.
WE'RE ON UNKNOWN TERRITORY HERE.
NO KIDDING, SHERLOCK.
GET SERIOUS, CLINT, WILL YOU?
"WE'VE PROBABLY ACTIVATED THE ONBOARD SECURITY SYSTEMS BY NOW."
SECURITY BREACH: UNIDENTIFIED INTRUDERS SEARCHING DATABASE FOR MATCH WITH KNOWN THREAT FORCES*
*TRANSLATED FROM THE KREE, OF COURSE. --NEL
WOW. BIG CROWD TONIGHT.
METHINKS THIS PALACE BE DESERTED.
OR MAYBE FULLY AUTOMATED.
I'VE BEEN ON BATTLEFIELDS THAT FELT LIKE THIS, AFTER A BATTLE WAS LOST AND THE FALLEN HAD BEEN CARRIED AWAY.
THANKS FOR THAT CHEERY THOUGHT, CAP.

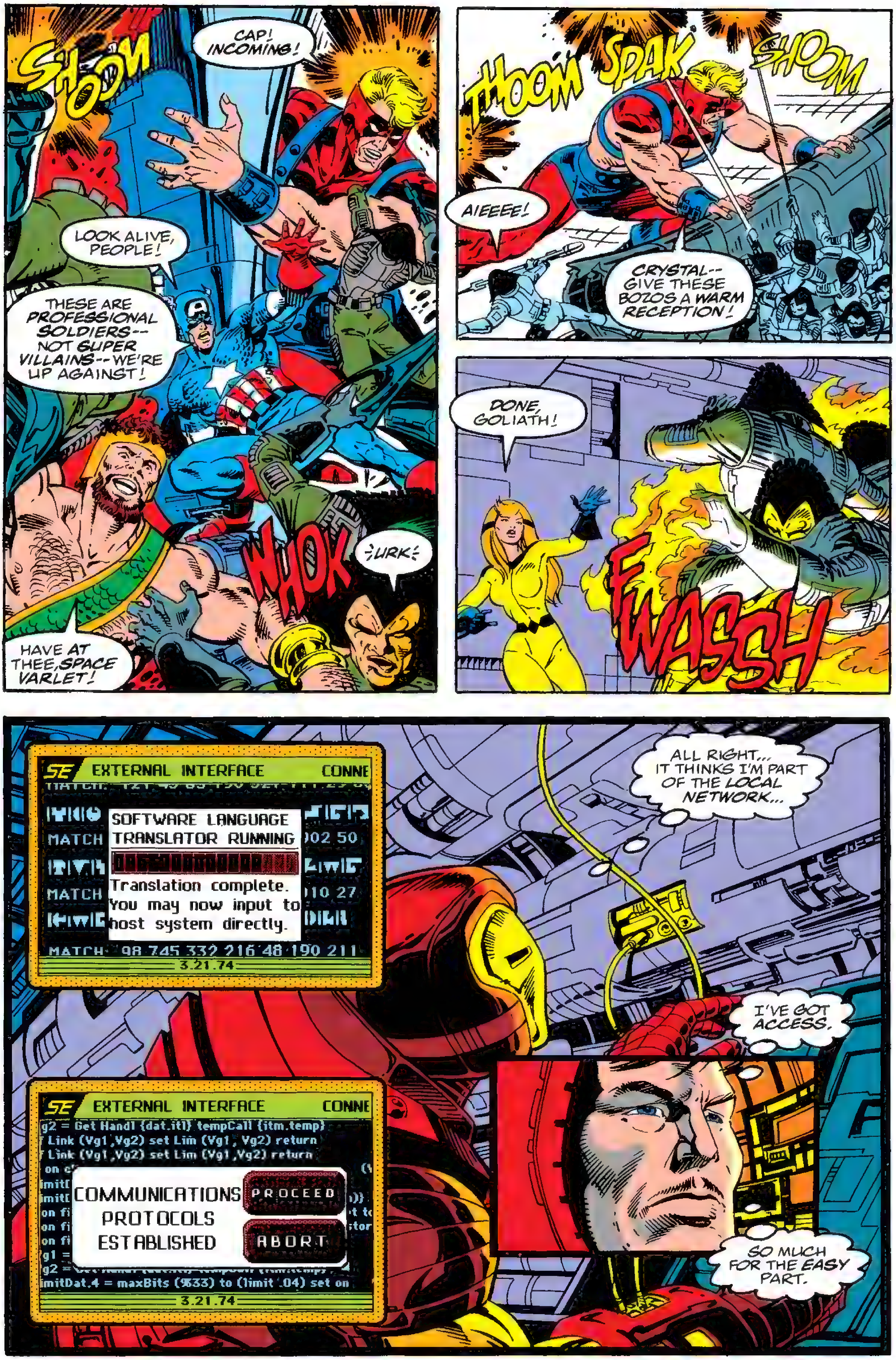

MERELY AN OBSERVATION, IRON MAN.
NO NEED TO GET SNAPPISH.
SNAPPISH? WHO'S SNAPPISH?
POSITIVE MATCH: KNOWN HOSTILES
DESIGNATE AVENGERS
SOURCE SOL III
CLASSIFICATION: THREAT LEVEL OMEGA
NOTIFYING HOMEWORLD AUTHORITIES...
HALA, HOMEWORLD OF THE KREE.
SO.
CAPITAL OF THEIR EMPIRE, AND RESIDENCE OF THEIR MOST TERRIFYING CREATION--
--THE INHUMAN MONSTROSITY KNOWN AS THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE.
ONCE AGAIN, THESE GNATS FROM EARTH HAVE DARED ENTER KREE TERRITORY.
EXCELLENT.
THEY SHALL MAKE SPLENDID PAWNS IN THE NEXT PHASE OF MY PLAN.
FIRST, HOWEVER, THEY MUST BE BROUGHT TO HALA IN A FASHION WHICH WILL NOT REVEAL MY SUBVERSION OF THE SECURITY NETWORK TO MY POLITICAL ADVERSARIES.
FORTUNATELY, THERE REMAIN MANY AGENTS LOYAL TO THE TRUE RULER OF THE KREE.
DOCTOR KEV-LAR.
WHAT IS YOUR COMMAND, SUPREME ONE?
BRING SHATTERAX ON-LINE.

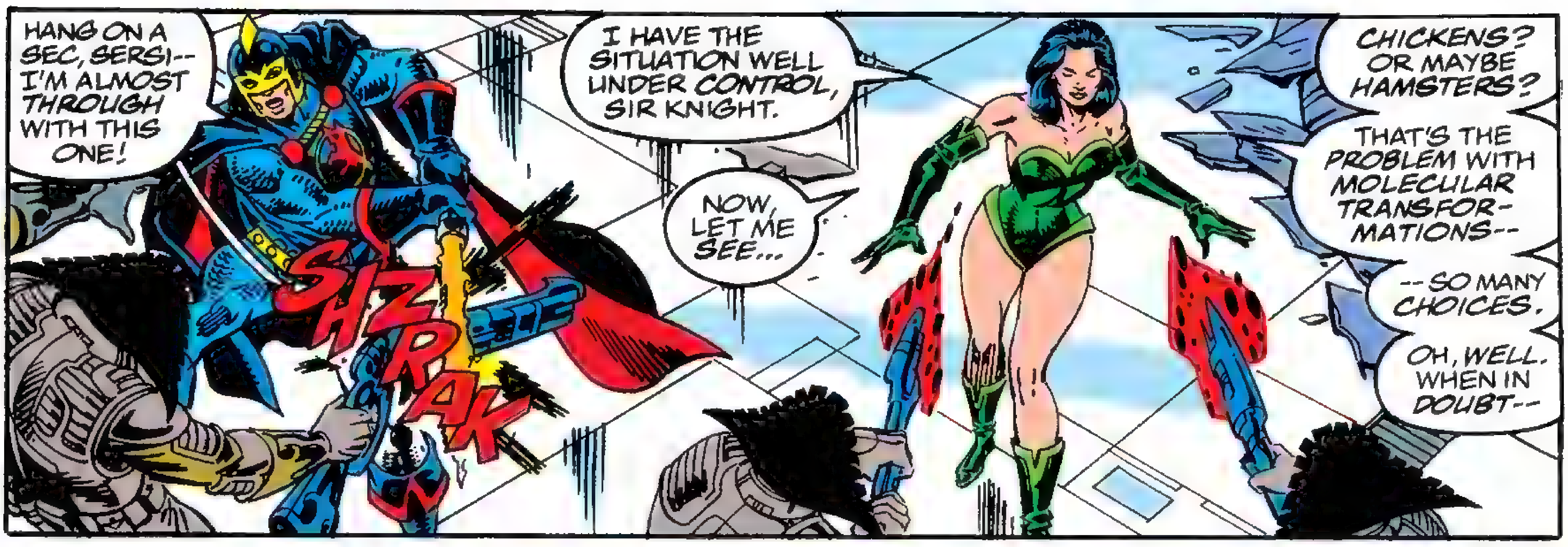

AGENT SHATTERAX IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING EXTENSIVE REPAIRS AND REFITTING.
HOW SOON DO YOU REQUIRE HIS SERVICES?
IMMEDIATELY.
ZAK
FZZT
AGHK
THIS UNIT CAN BE BROUGHT TO FULL CAPABILITY BY 1400 HOURS, SUPREME ONE.
HOWEVER, SUCH HASTE WILL SHORTEN HIS FUNCTIONAL LIFE SPAN BY AS MUCH AS 20 YEARS.
MAKE IT SO.
AS YOU WISH, SUPREME ONE?
HOW SATISFYING.
EVERYTHING PROCEEDS ACCORDING TO PLAN.
STRANGE THAT A FACILITY OF THIS SIZE SHOULD BE UNINHABITED.
THERE'S SOMETHING WE'RE NOT SEEING.

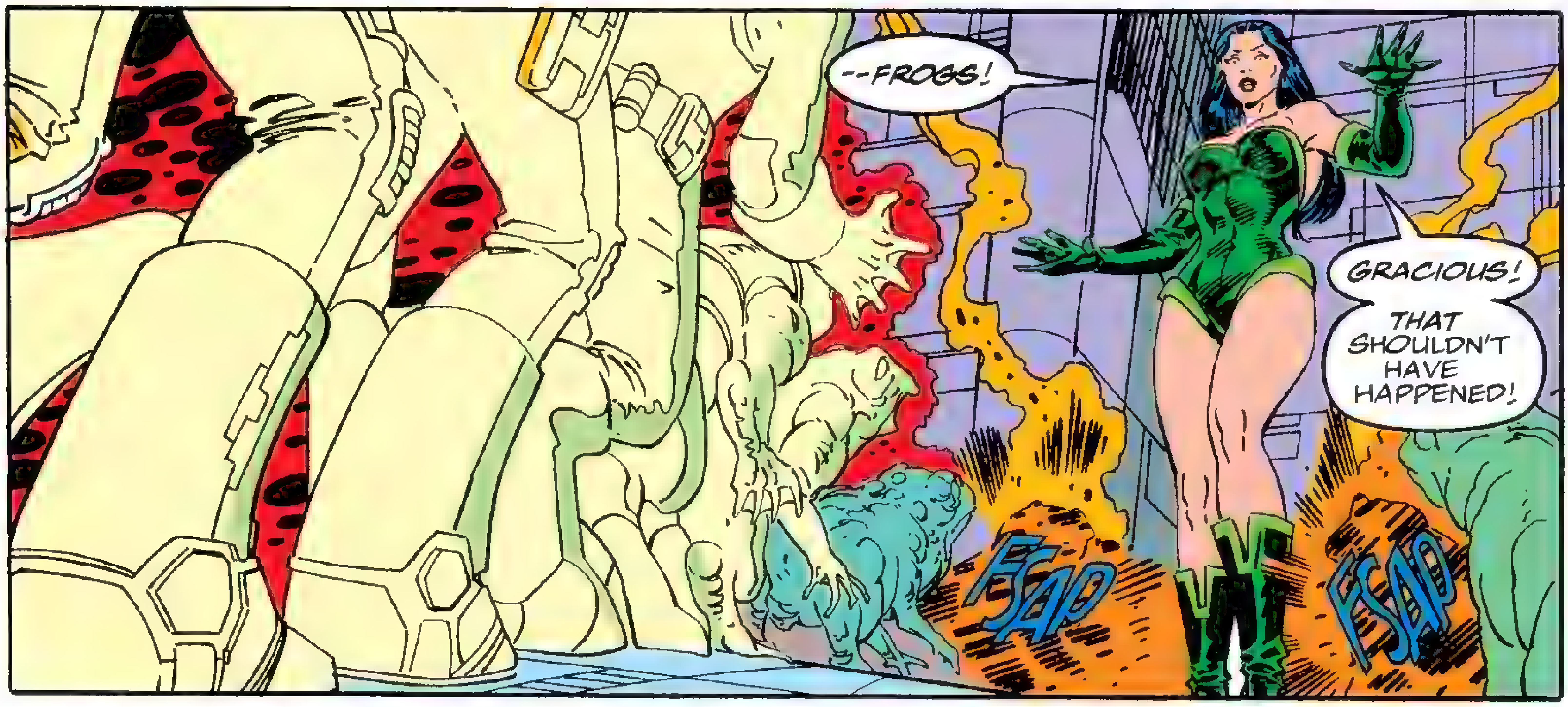

I'VE BEEN THINKING THE SAME THING MYSELF.
I WONDER IF--
IRON MAN?
MY SENSORS ARE DETECTING A MAJOR POWER FLUX BEHIND THIS BULKHEAD.
IT COULD BE...
HOLD ON--
RRUNCH
--WHILE I GET A CLOSER LOOK.
IS IT--?
YEP. PRIMARY SYSTEMS NEXUS.
JUST WHAT I WAS HOPING FOR.
FROM HERE, I CAN ACCESS THE ENTIRE STATION'S COMPUTER NETWORK--
--ASSUMING, OF COURSE, THAT I CAN CRACK THEIR SECURITY CODES.
GET COMFORTABLE, FOLKS.
THIS COULD TAKE A WHILE.
SE
COMMUNICATIONS
INTERNAL MONITOR
EXTERNAL INTERFACE
TELEMETRY
AUTO-REMOTE
DATA EXCHANGE BUFFER ENABLED
01.92.8

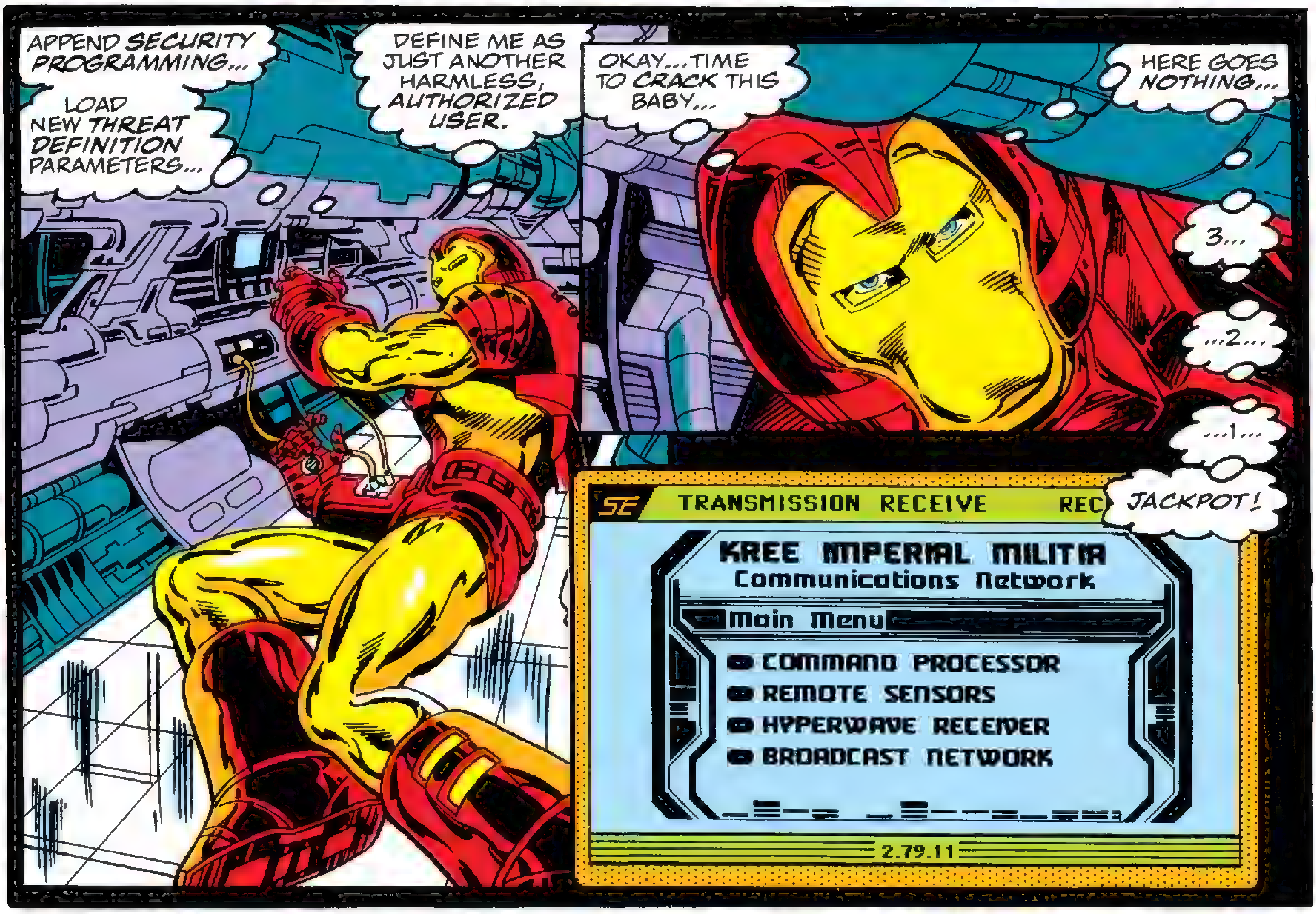

THE MINUTES CRAWL BY...
VERILY, 'TIS TIME FOR SOME RIGHTEOUS SMITING!
HAVE A LITTLE PATIENCE, HERCULES.
DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH, CRYSTAL. IF HERC HASN'T LEARNED ANYTHING...
THAT'S ENOUGH, DANE.
THIS IS NO TIME TO ARGUE AMONGST OURSELVES. WE'VE GOT TO--
AVENGERS!
WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!
DEATH TO THE OUTWORLDERS!
SHRAK
ZZRAK
BDAM
AH, THIS DOTH BE MORE LIKE IT!
SHI'AR COMMANDOS?
WHAT'RE THEY DOING HERE?
NO TIME FOR THAT NOW!
DEFENSIVE POSITIONS, PEOPLE!
WE'VE GOT TO BUY IRON MAN TIME TO FINISH!

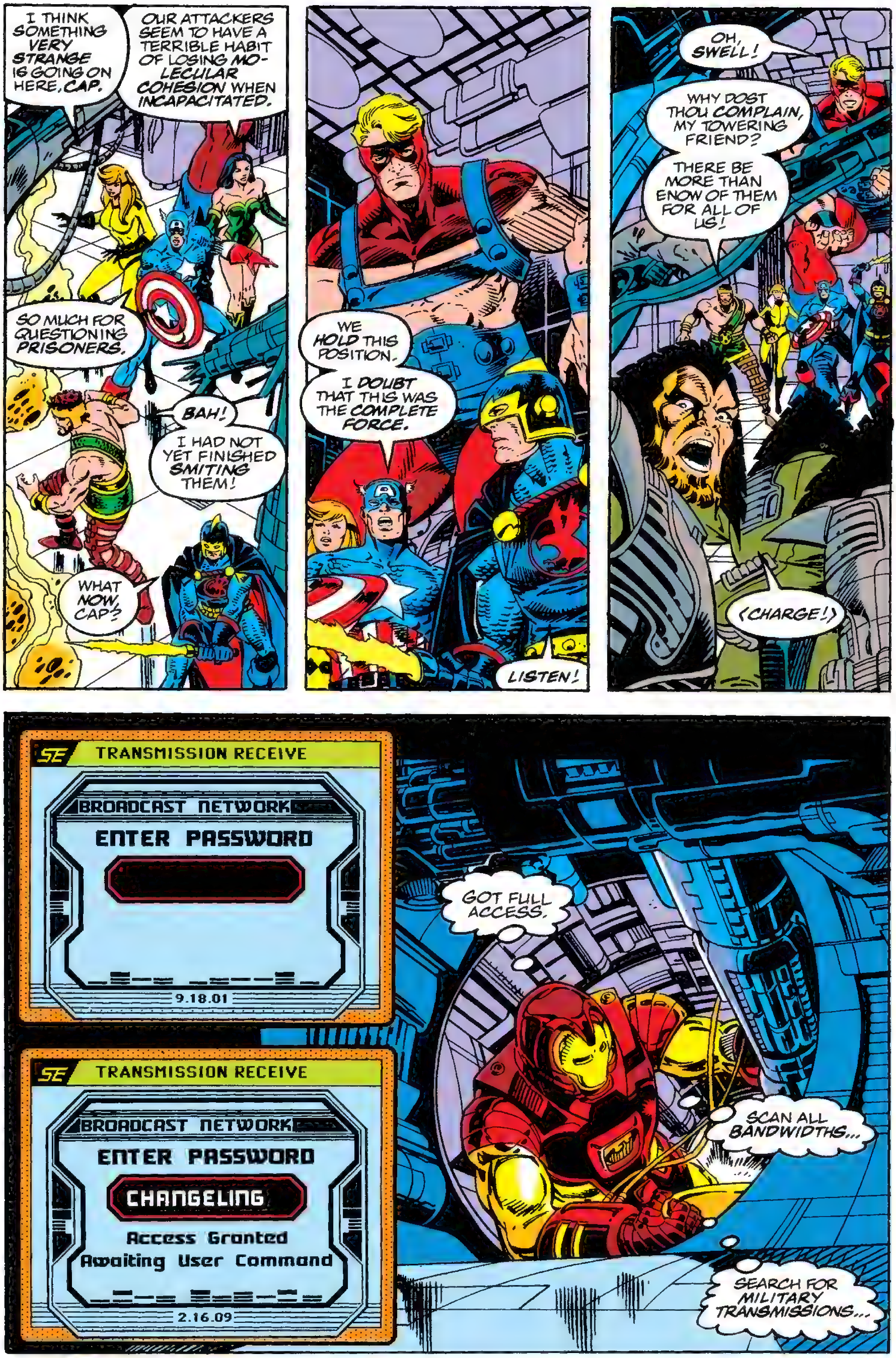

HO, YE ALIEN SCOUNDRELS!
TASTE THE MIGHT OF THE LION OF OLYMPUS!
ZZAK
WELL, AT LEAST HERCULES IS HAPPY NOW...
GOOD WORK, AVENGERS!
THUD
DON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO--
--DISINTEGRATE?!
FSAP
MEANWHILE, IN THE ACCESS SHAFT, A BATTLE OF ANOTHER KIND BEGINS...
A CLASH OF PARAMETERS AND PROTOCOLS...
...OF SECURITY CODES AND CONNECTIVITY.
SE EXTERNAL INTERFACE CONNECT
INFILTRATION PROGRAM RUNNING...
MAPPING SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE
15.2.03
SE EXTERNAL INTERFACE CONNECT MAN
INFILTRATION PROGRAM RUNNING...
ROM SOURCE CODE LOCATED
BIOS RAM DECRYPTION IN PROCESS...
15.2.03
EASY, EASY... LET THE SYSTEM THINK I'M JUST ANOTHER SENSOR GRID AT FIRST...
...THEN SWITCH OVER--TRICK IT INTO CLASSIFYING ME AS PART OF SELF-DIAGNOSTIC...

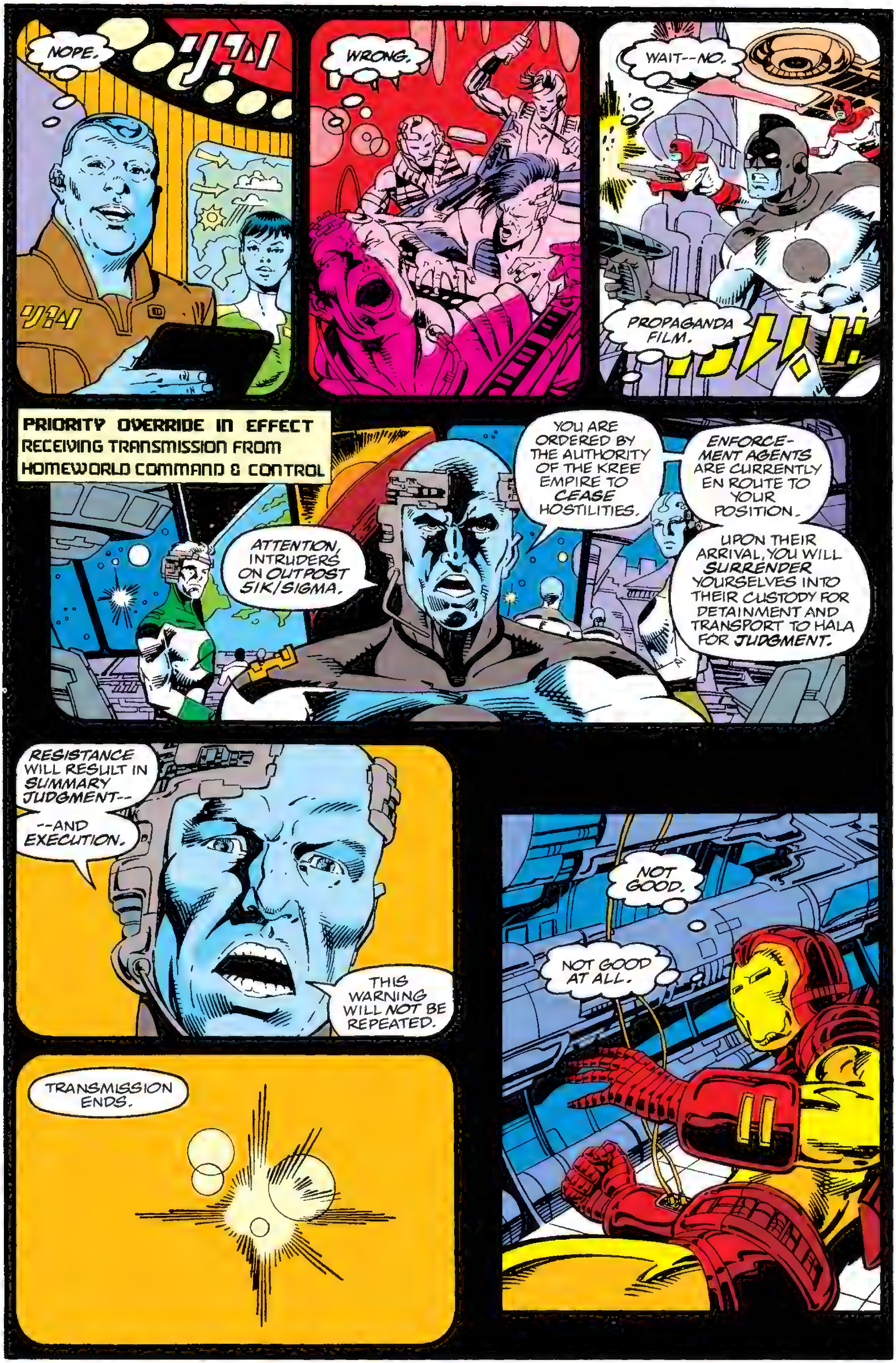

SHOOM
CAP! INCOMING!
LOOK ALIVE, PEOPLE!
THESE ARE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS-- NOT SUPER VILLAINS--WE'RE UP AGAINST!
WHOK
URK
HAVE AT THEE, SPACE VARLET!
THOOM
SPAK
SHOOM
AIEEEE!
CRYSTAL-- GIVE THESE BOZOS A WARM RECEPTION!
DONE, GOLIATH!
FWASSH
SE EXTERNAL INTERFACE CONNE
SOFTWARE LANGUAGE TRANSLATOR RUNNING
Translation complete. You may now input to host system directly.
MATCH
MATCH 98 745 332 216 48 190 211
3.21.74
ALL RIGHT... IT THINKS I'M PART OF THE LOCAL NETWORK...
I'VE GOT ACCESS.
SE EXTERNAL INTERFACE CONNE
g2 = Get Handl {dat.itl} tempCall {itm.temp}
Link (Vg1,Vg2) set Lim (Vg1, Vg2) return
Link (Vg1,Vg2) set Lim (Vg1,Vg2) return
COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOLS ESTABLISHED
PROCEED
ABORT
imitDat.4 = maxBits (%33) to (limit .04) set on
3.21.74
SO MUCH FOR THE EASY PART.

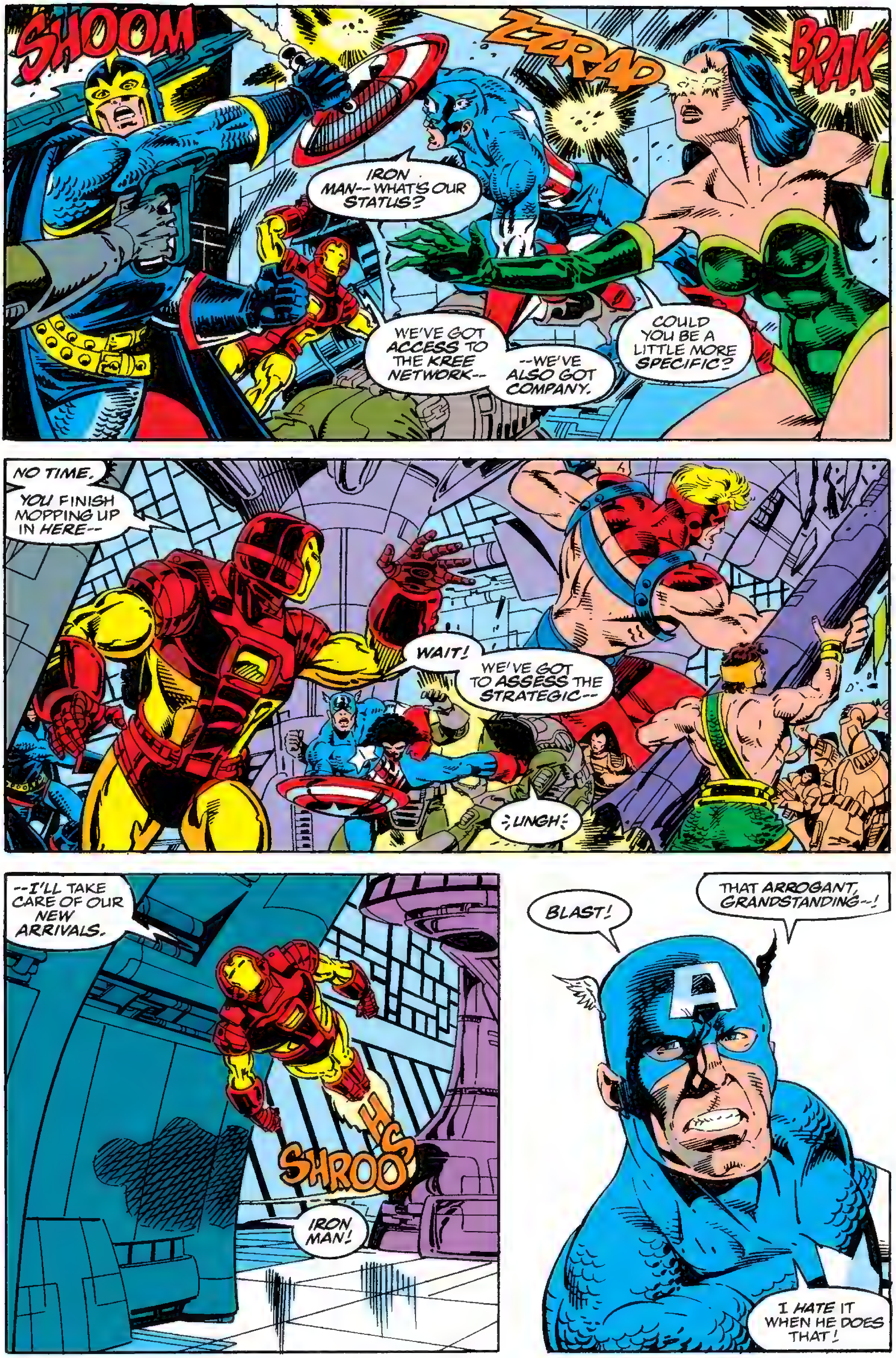

HANG ON A SEC, SERSI-- I'M ALMOST THROUGH WITH THIS ONE!
SHZRAK
I HAVE THE SITUATION WELL UNDER CONTROL, SIR KNIGHT.
NOW, LET ME SEE...
CHICKENS? OR MAYBE HAMSTERS?
THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH MOLECULAR TRANSFORMATIONS--
--SO MANY CHOICES.
OH, WELL. WHEN IN DOUBT--

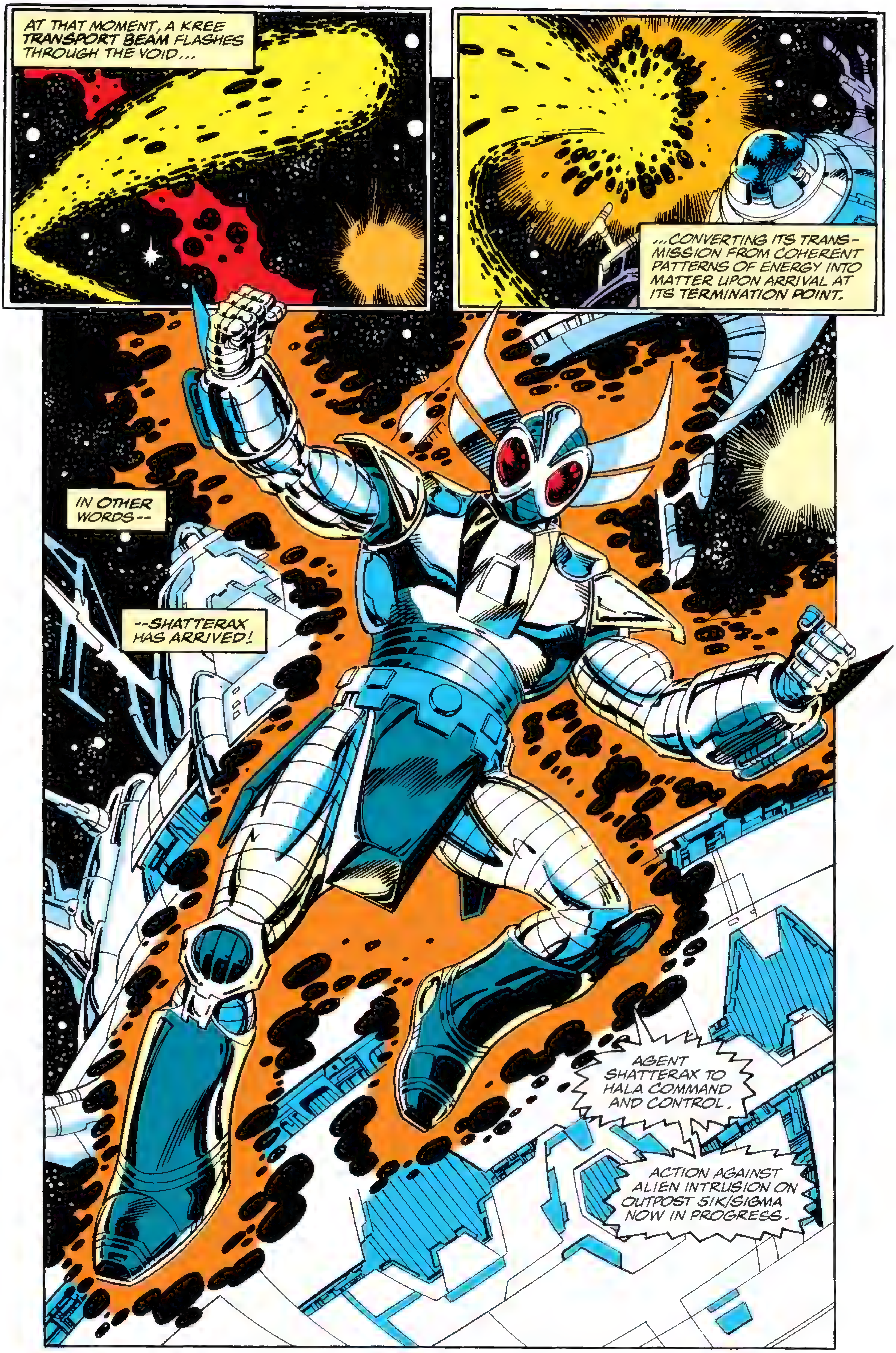

--FROGS!
GRACIOUS!
THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED!
FSAP
FSAP

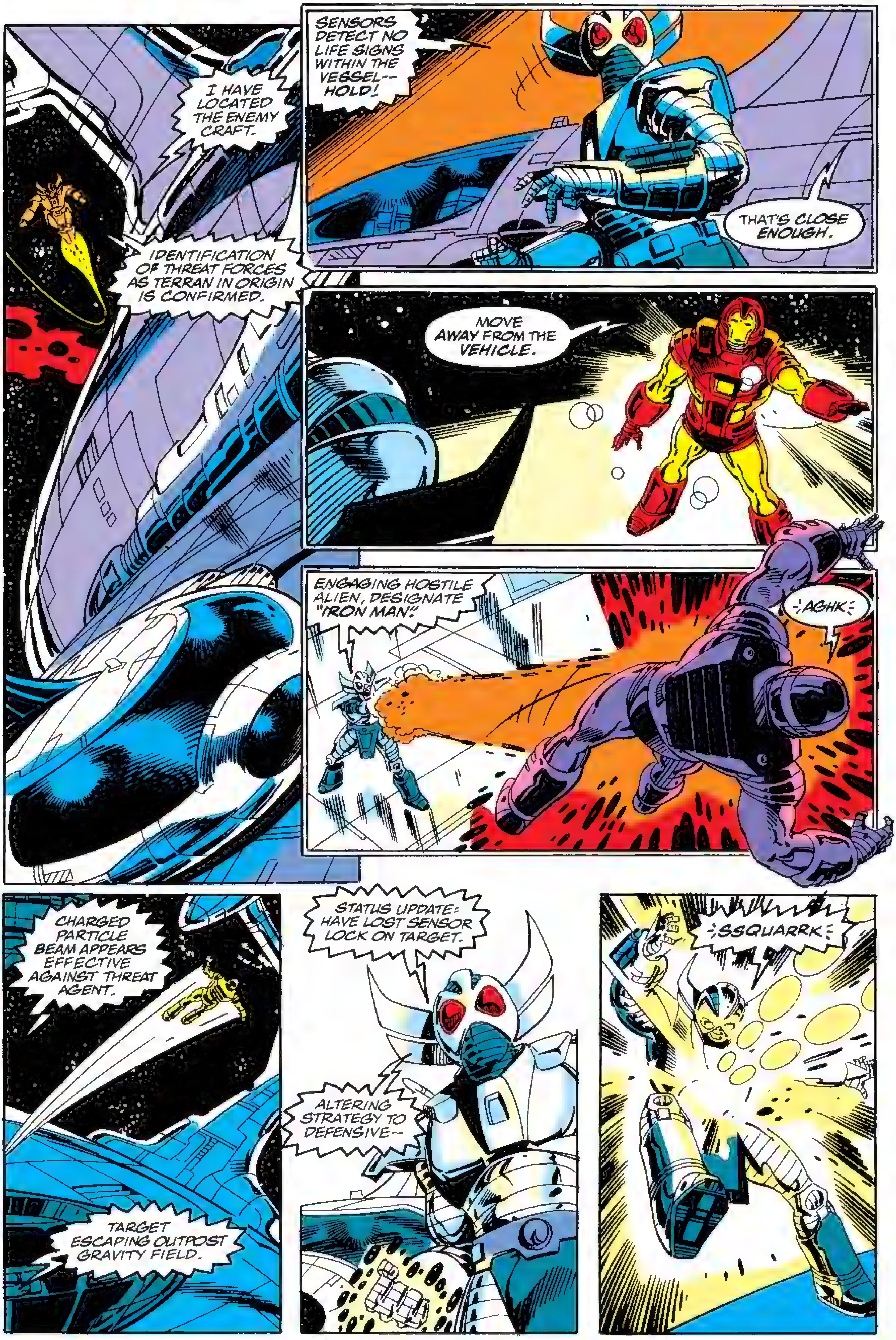

APPEND SECURITY PROGRAMMING...
LOAD NEW THREAT DEFINITION PARAMETERS...
DEFINE ME AS JUST ANOTHER HARMLESS, AUTHORIZED USER.
OKAY... TIME TO CRACK THIS BABY...
HERE GOES NOTHING...
3...
...2...
...1...
JACKPOT!
SE
TRANSMISSION RECEIVE
REC
KREE IMPERIAL MILITIA
Communications Network
Main Menu
COMMAND PROCESSOR
REMOTE SENSORS
HYPERWAVE RECEIVER
BROADCAST NETWORK
2.79.11

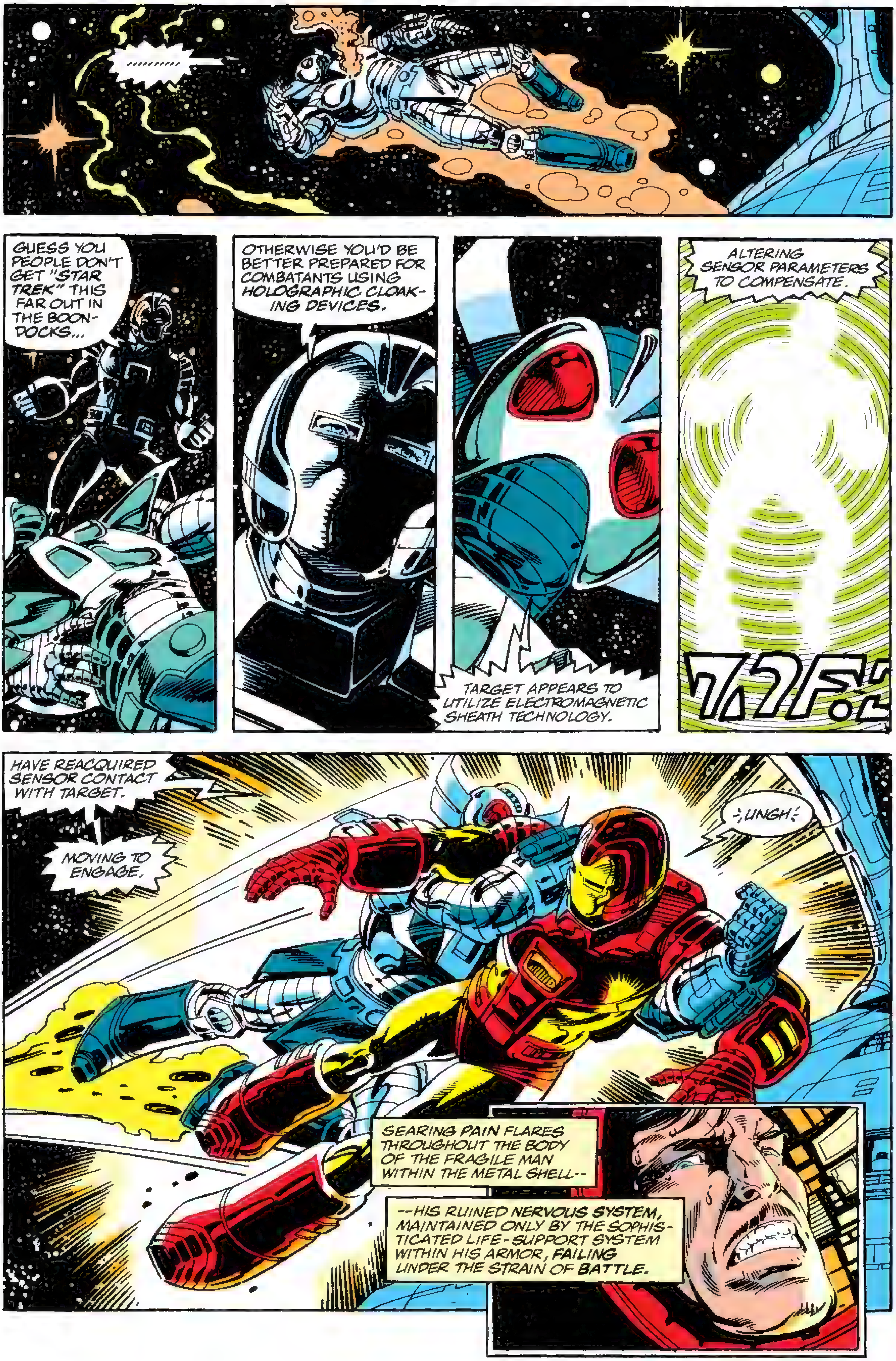

I THINK SOMETHING VERY STRANGE IS GOING ON HERE, CAP.
OUR ATTACKERS SEEM TO HAVE A TERRIBLE HABIT OF LOSING MOLECULAR COHESION WHEN INCAPACITATED.
SO MUCH FOR QUESTIONING PRISONERS.
BAH!
I HAD NOT YET FINISHED SMITING THEM!
WHAT NOW, CAP?
WE HOLD THIS POSITION.
I DOUBT THAT THIS WAS THE COMPLETE FORCE.
LISTEN!
OH, SWELL!
WHY DOST THOU COMPLAIN, MY TOWERING FRIEND?
THERE BE MORE THAN ENOW OF THEM FOR ALL OF US!
(CHARGE!)
SE TRANSMISSION RECEIVE
BROADCAST NETWORK
ENTER PASSWORD
9.18.01
SE TRANSMISSION RECEIVE
BROADCAST NETWORK
ENTER PASSWORD
CHANGELING
Access Granted
Awaiting User Command
2.16.09
GOT FULL ACCESS.
SCAN ALL BANDWIDTHS...
SEARCH FOR MILITARY TRANSMISSIONS...

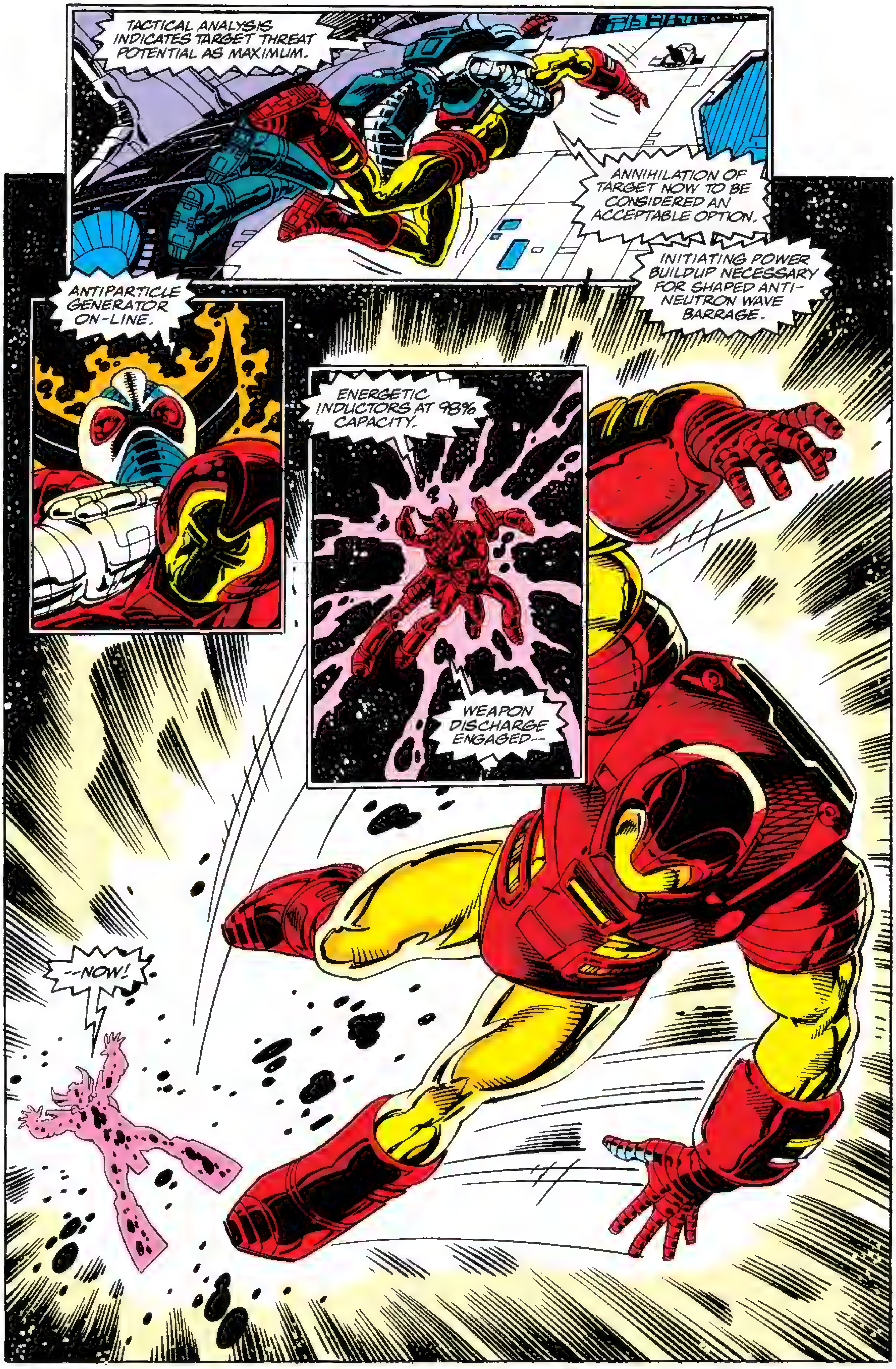

NOPE.
WRONG.
WAIT--NO.
PROPAGANDA FILM.
PRIORITY OVERRIDE IN EFFECT
RECEIVING TRANSMISSION FROM
HOMEWORLD COMMAND & CONTROL
ATTENTION, INTRUDERS ON OUTPOST 51K/SIGMA.
YOU ARE ORDERED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE KREE EMPIRE TO CEASE HOSTILITIES.
ENFORCEMENT AGENTS ARE CURRENTLY EN ROUTE TO YOUR POSITION.
UPON THEIR ARRIVAL, YOU WILL SURRENDER YOURSELVES INTO THEIR CUSTODY FOR DETAINMENT AND TRANSPORT TO HALA FOR JUDGMENT.
RESISTANCE WILL RESULT IN SUMMARY JUDGMENT--
--AND EXECUTION.
THIS WARNING WILL NOT BE REPEATED.
TRANSMISSION ENDS.
NOT GOOD.
NOT GOOD AT ALL.

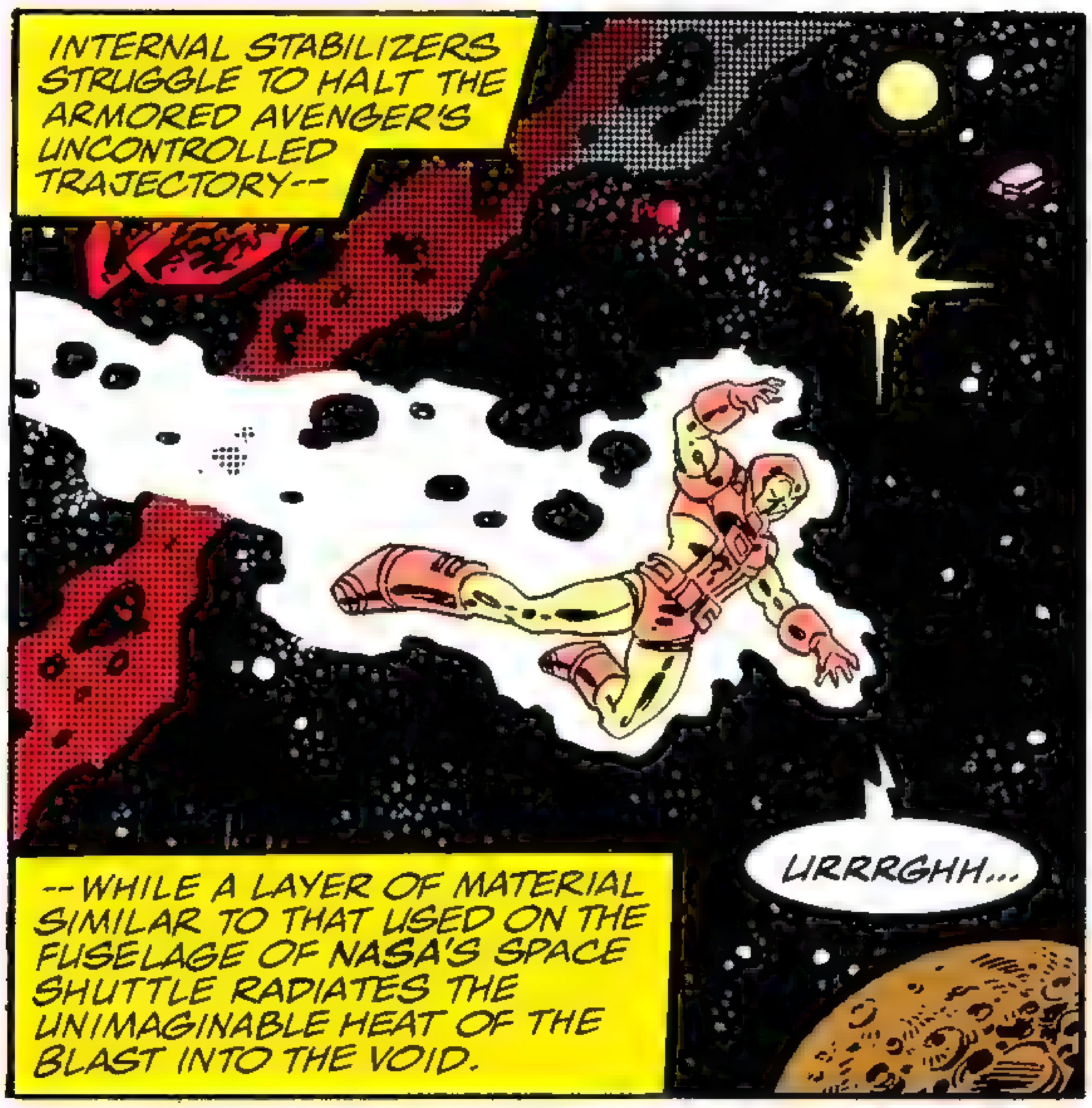

SHOOM
ZZARAP
BRAK
IRON MAN-- WHAT'S OUR STATUS?
WE'VE GOT ACCESS TO THE KREE NETWORK--
--WE'VE ALSO GOT COMPANY.
COULD YOU BE A LITTLE MORE SPECIFIC?
NO TIME.
YOU FINISH MOPPING UP IN HERE--
WAIT!
WE'VE GOT TO ASSESS THE STRATEGIC--
UNGH
--I'LL TAKE CARE OF OUR NEW ARRIVALS.
SHROOOOSH
IRON MAN!
BLAST!
THAT ARROGANT, GRANDSTANDING--!
I HATE IT WHEN HE DOES THAT!

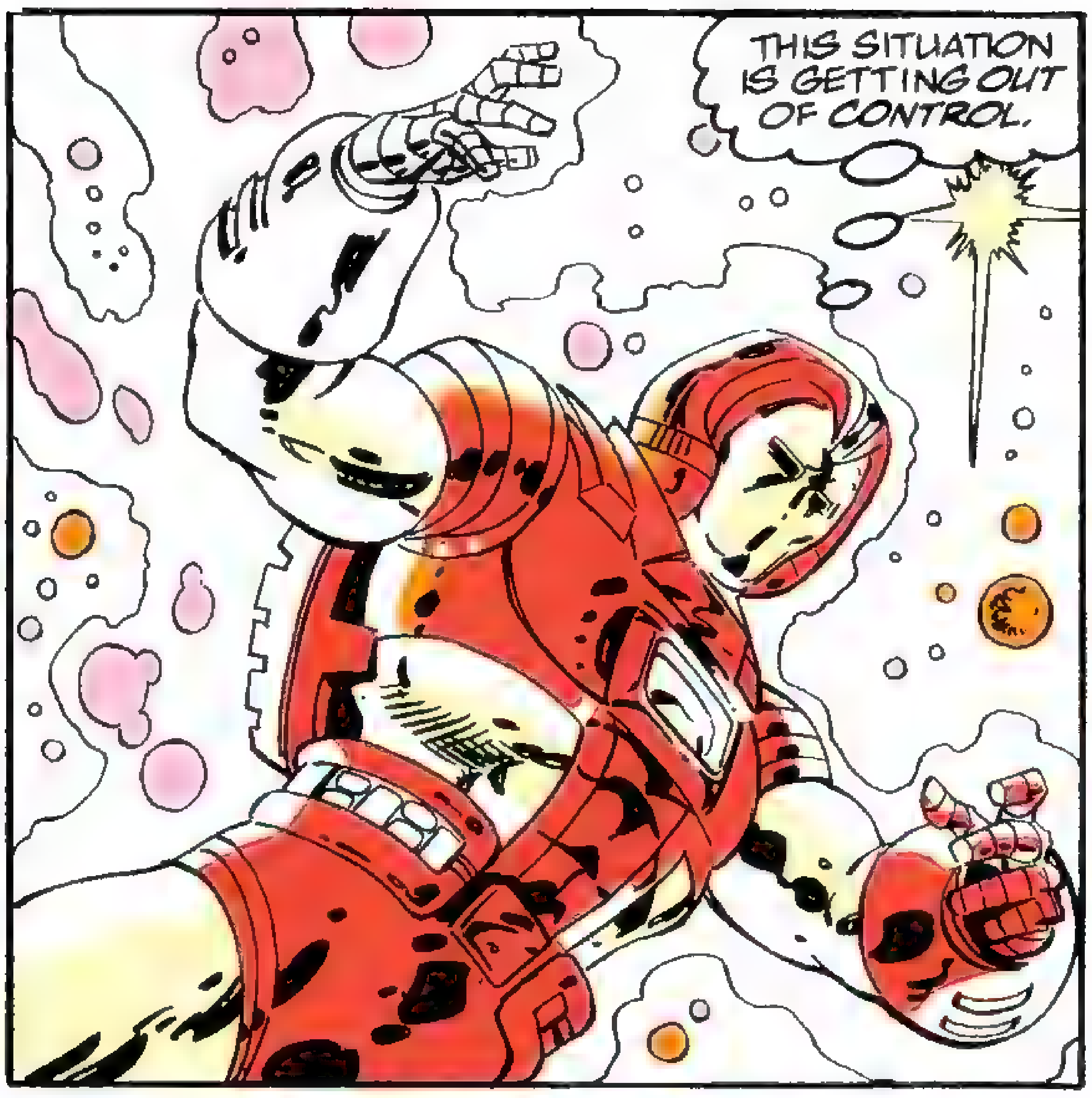

AT THAT MOMENT, A KREE TRANSPORT BEAM FLASHES THROUGH THE VOID...
...CONVERTING ITS TRANSMISSION FROM COHERENT PATTERNS OF ENERGY INTO MATTER UPON ARRIVAL AT ITS TERMINATION POINT.
IN OTHER WORDS--
--SHATTERAX HAS ARRIVED!
AGENT SHATTERAX TO HALA COMMAND AND CONTROL.
ACTION AGAINST ALIEN INTRUSION ON OUTPOST SIK/SIGMA NOW IN PROGRESS.

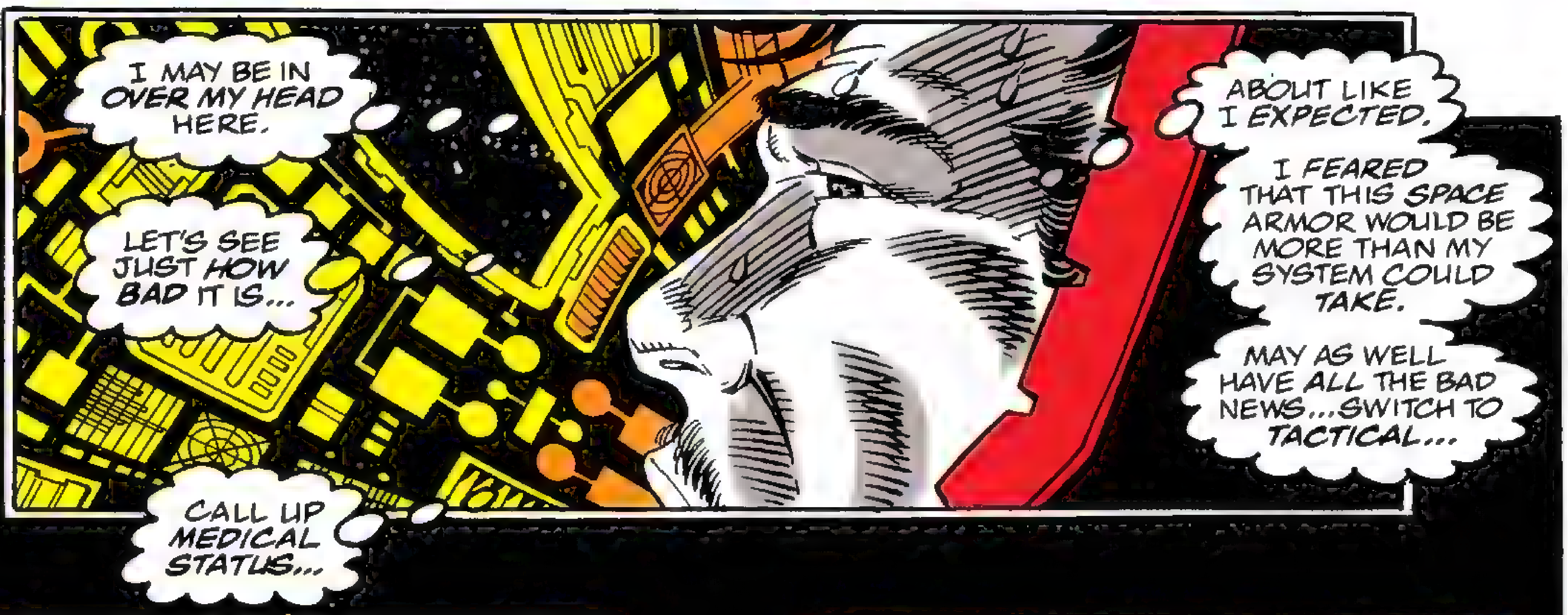

I HAVE LOCATED THE ENEMY CRAFT.
IDENTIFICATION OF THREAT FORCES AS TERRAN IN ORIGIN IS CONFIRMED.
SENSORS DETECT NO LIFE SIGNS WITHIN THE VESSEL-- HOLD!
THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH.
MOVE AWAY FROM THE VEHICLE.
ENGAGING HOSTILE ALIEN, DESIGNATE "IRON MAN."
AGHK
CHARGED PARTICLE BEAM APPEARS EFFECTIVE AGAINST THREAT AGENT.
TARGET ESCAPING OUTPOST GRAVITY FIELD.
STATUS UPDATE: HAVE LOST SENSOR LOCK ON TARGET.
ALTERING STRATEGY TO DEFENSIVE--
SSQUARRK

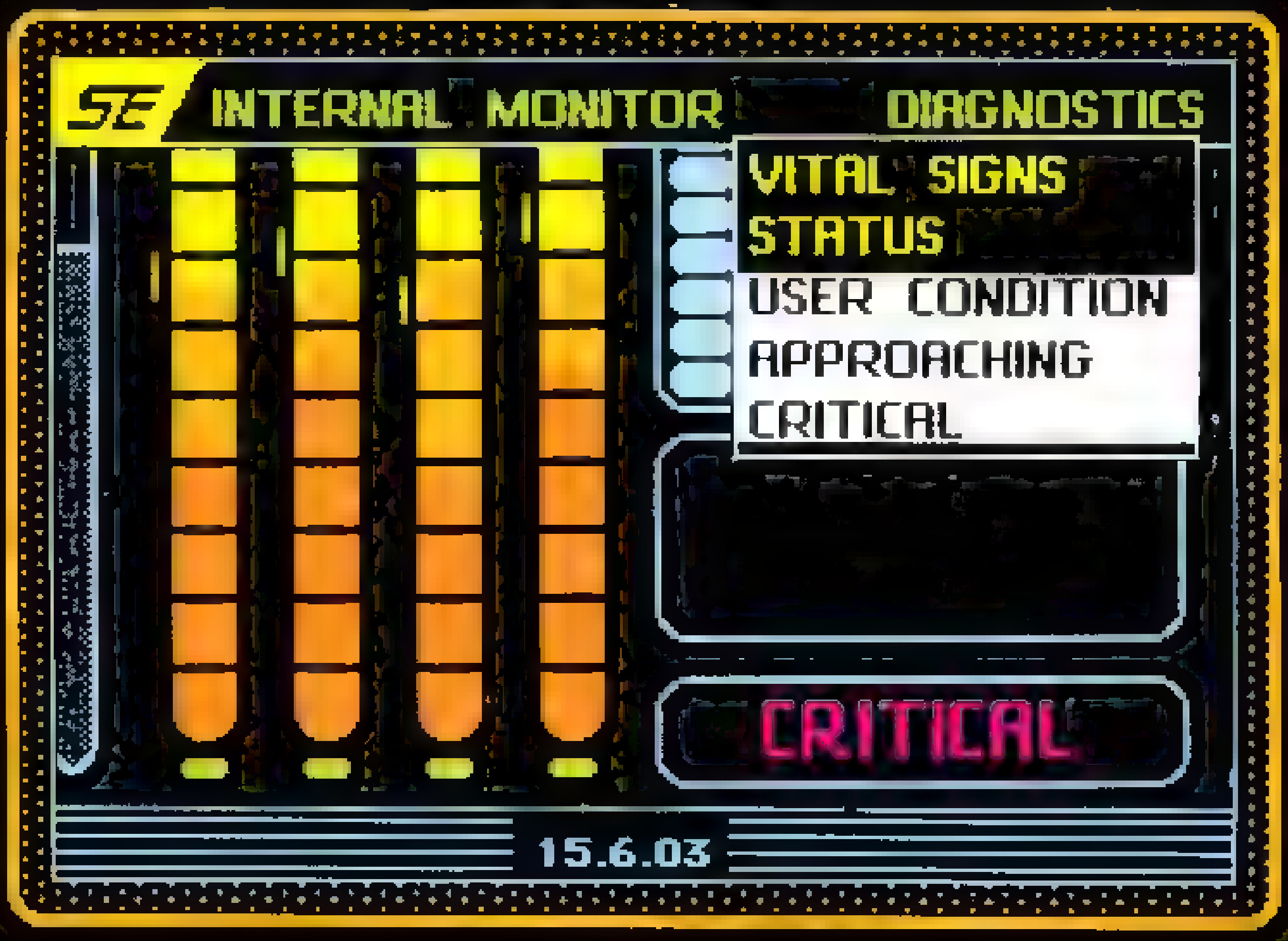

....
GUESS YOU PEOPLE DON'T GET "STAR TREK" THIS FAR OUT IN THE BOONDOCKS...
OTHERWISE YOU'D BE BETTER PREPARED FOR COMBATANTS USING *HOLOGRAPHIC CLOAKING DEVICES.*
TARGET APPEARS TO UTILIZE ELECTROMAGNETIC SHEATH TECHNOLOGY.
ALTERING SENSOR PARAMETERS TO COMPENSATE.
HAVE REACQUIRED SENSOR CONTACT WITH TARGET.
MOVING TO ENGAGE.
UNGH!
SEARING **PAIN** FLARES THROUGHOUT THE BODY OF THE FRAGILE MAN WITHIN THE METAL SHELL--
--HIS RUINED **NERVOUS SYSTEM,** MAINTAINED ONLY BY THE SOPHISTICATED LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEM WITHIN HIS ARMOR, **FAILING** UNDER THE STRAIN OF **BATTLE.**

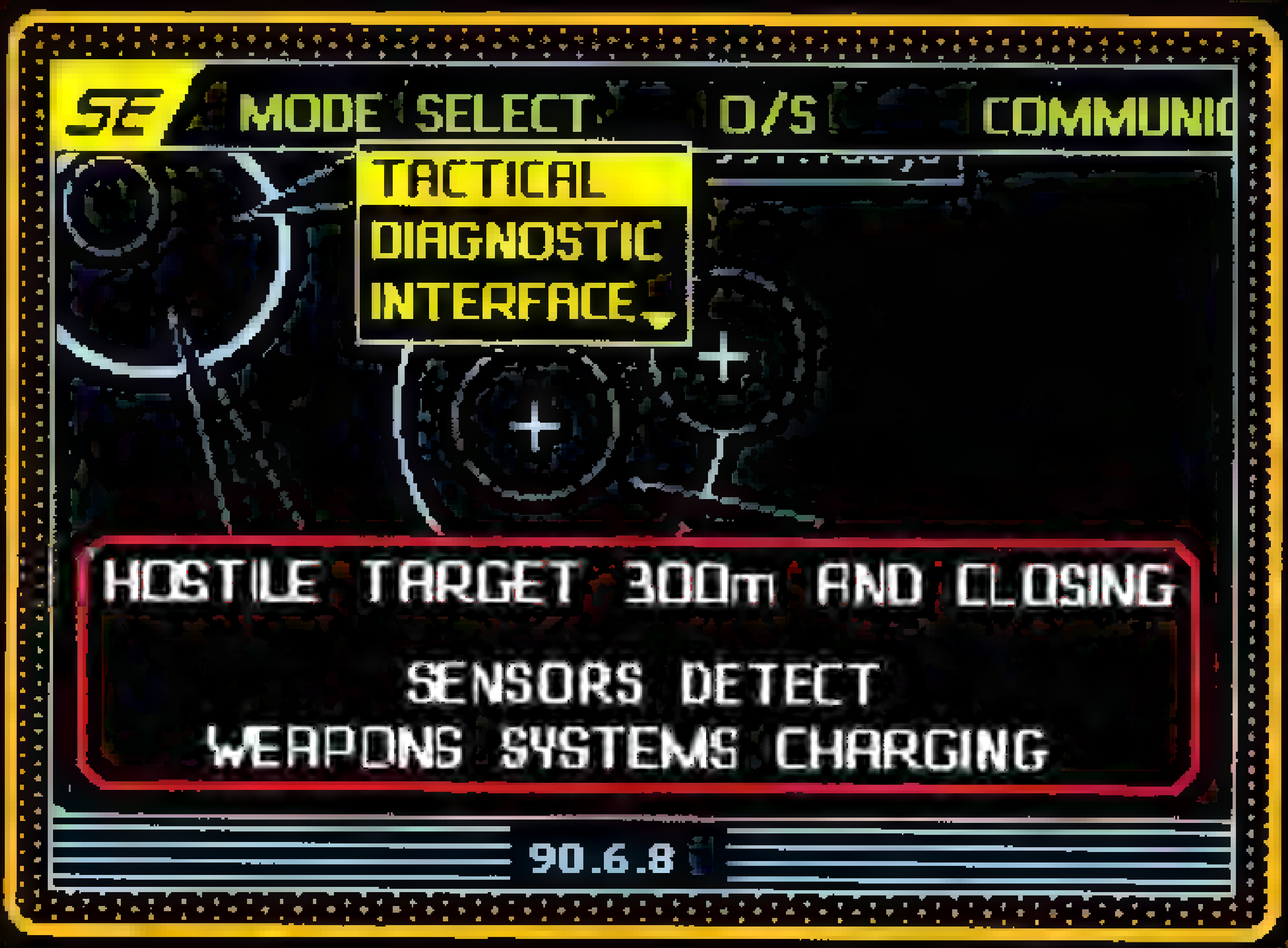

TACTICAL ANALYSIS INDICATES TARGET THREAT POTENTIAL AS MAXIMUM.
ANNIHILATION OF TARGET NOW TO BE CONSIDERED AN ACCEPTABLE OPTION.
ANTIPARTICLE GENERATOR ON-LINE.
INITIATING POWER BUILDUP NECESSARY FOR SHAPED ANTI-NEUTRON WAVE BARRAGE.
ENERGETIC INDUCTORS AT 98% CAPACITY.
WEAPON DISCHARGE ENGAGED--
--NOW!

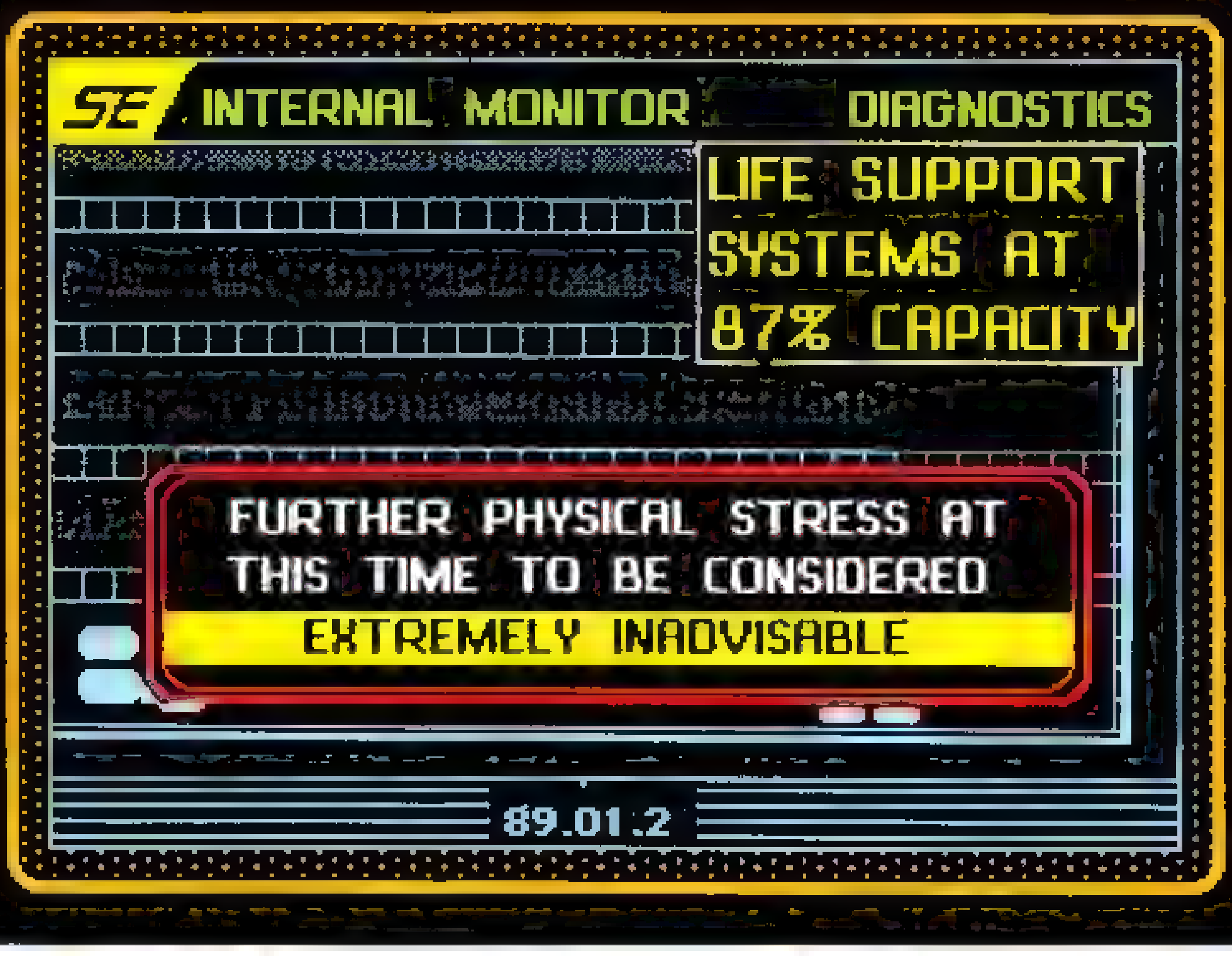

INTERNAL STABILIZERS STRUGGLE TO HALT THE ARMORED AVENGER'S UNCONTROLLED TRAJECTORY--
--WHILE A LAYER OF MATERIAL SIMILAR TO THAT USED ON THE FUSELAGE OF NASA'S SPACE SHUTTLE RADIATES THE UNIMAGINABLE HEAT OF THE BLAST INTO THE VOID.
URRRGHH...

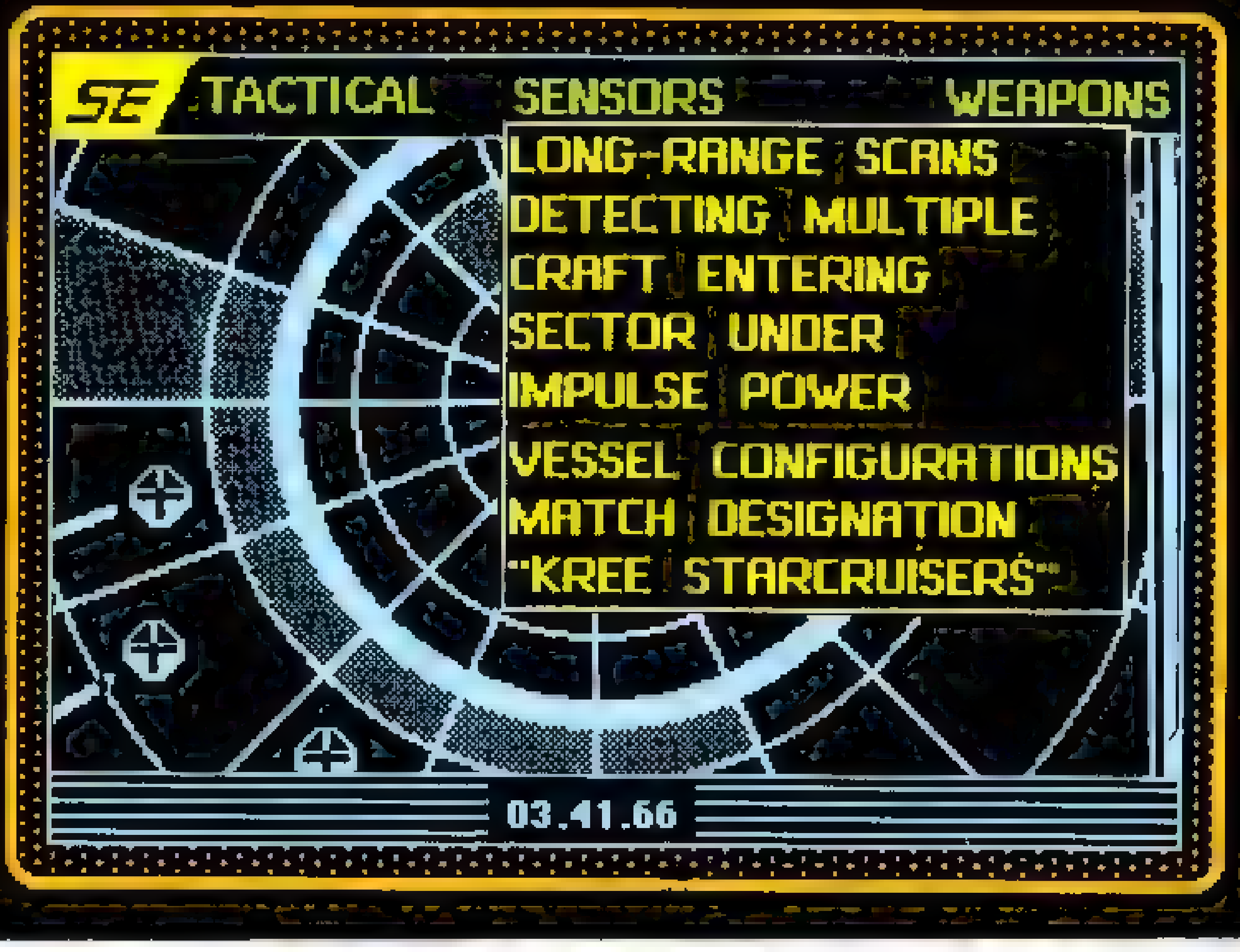

THIS SITUATION IS GETTING OUT OF CONTROL.

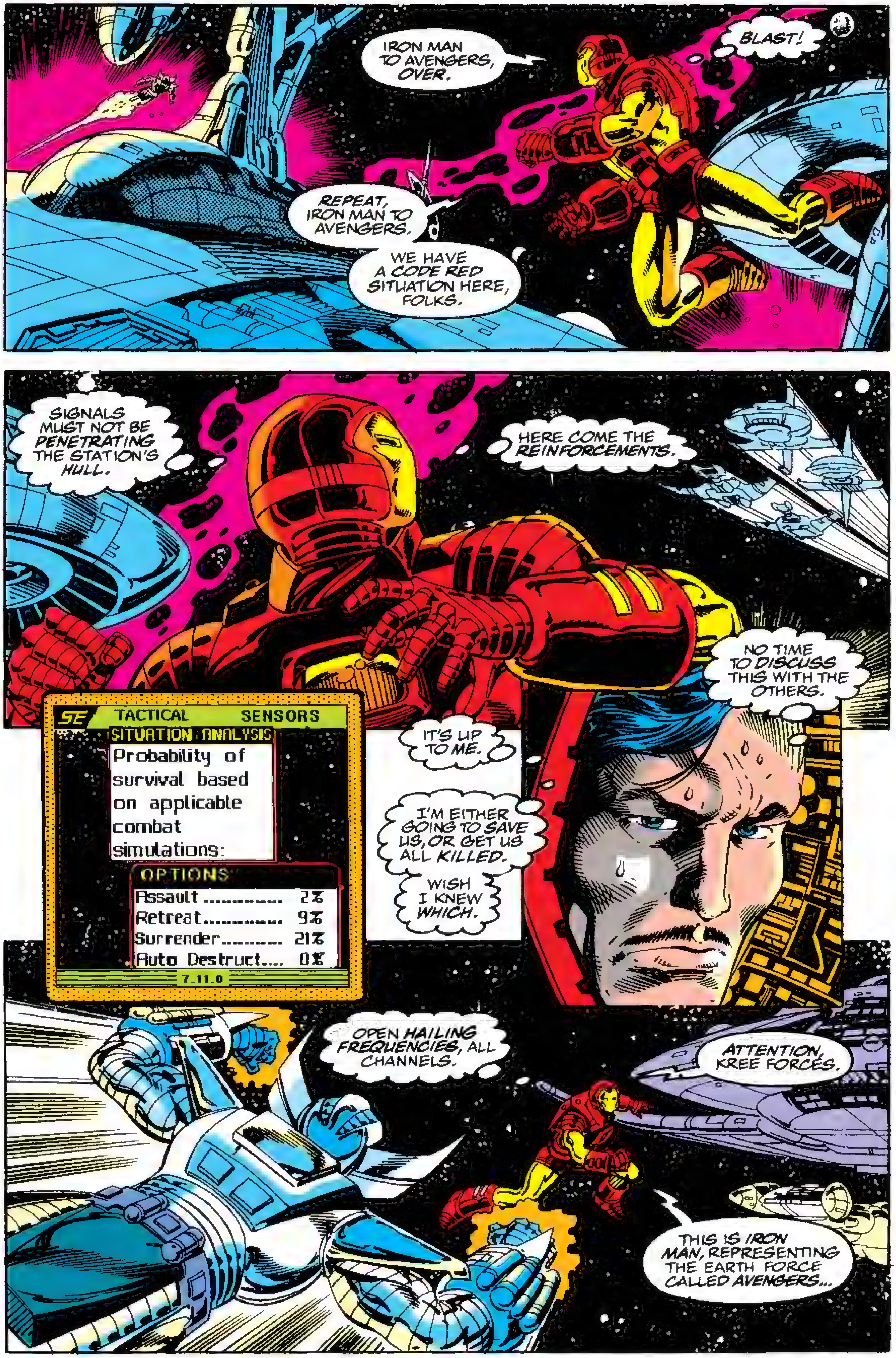

I MAY BE IN OVER MY HEAD HERE.
LET'S SEE JUST HOW BAD IT IS...
CALL UP MEDICAL STATUS...
ABOUT LIKE I EXPECTED.
I FEARED THAT THIS SPACE ARMOR WOULD BE MORE THAN MY SYSTEM COULD TAKE.
MAY AS WELL HAVE ALL THE BAD NEWS...SWITCH TO TACTICAL...

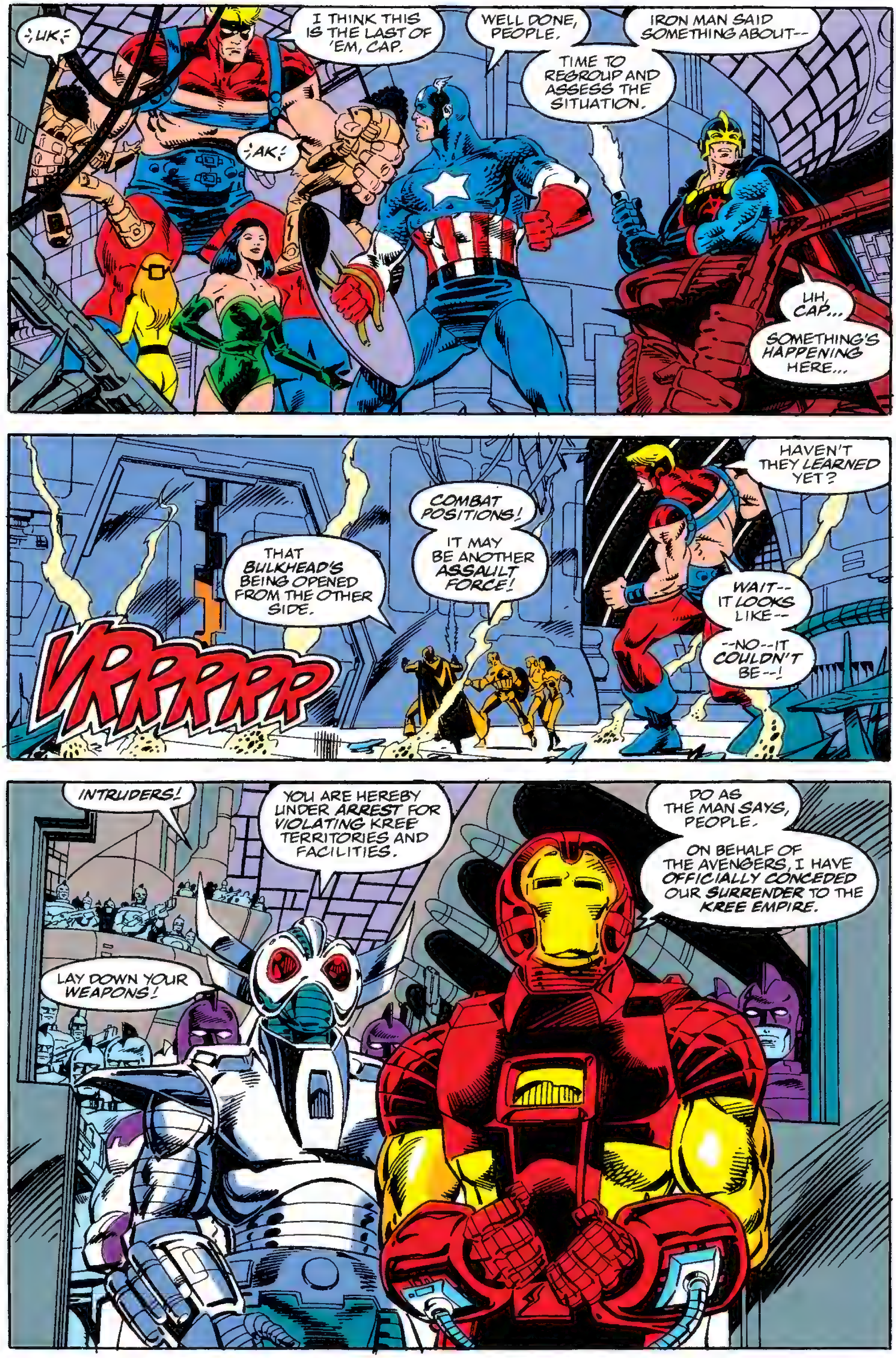

SE INTERNAL MONITOR DIAGNOSTICS
VITAL SIGNS STATUS
USER CONDITION APPROACHING CRITICAL
CRITICAL
15.6.03

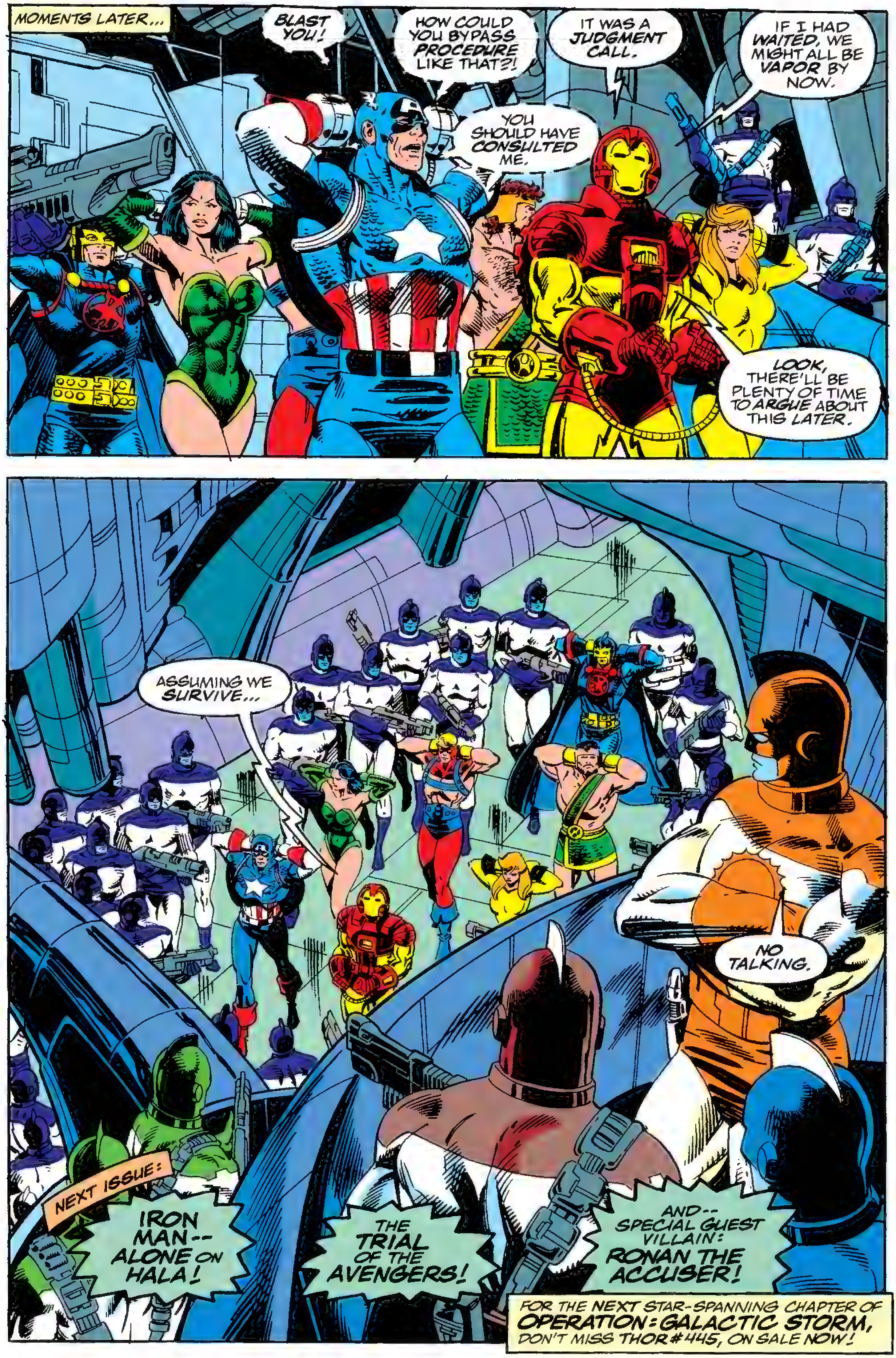

SE MODE SELECT O/S COMMUNIC
TACTICAL
DIAGNOSTIC
INTERFACE
HOSTILE TARGET 300m AND CLOSING
SENSORS DETECT WEAPONS SYSTEMS CHARGING
90.6.8


SE INTERNAL MONITOR DIAGNOSTICS
LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS AT 87% CAPACITY
FURTHER PHYSICAL STRESS AT THIS TIME TO BE CONSIDERED EXTREMELY INADVISABLE
89.01.2


SE TACTICAL SENSORS WEAPONS
LONG-RANGE SCANS DETECTING MULTIPLE CRAFT ENTERING SECTOR UNDER IMPULSE POWER
VESSEL CONFIGURATIONS MATCH DESIGNATION "KREE STARCRUISERS"
03.41.66


IRON MAN TO AVENGERS, OVER.
BLAST!
REPEAT, IRON MAN TO AVENGERS.
WE HAVE A CODE RED SITUATION HERE, FOLKS.
SIGNALS MUST NOT BE PENETRATING THE STATION'S HULL.
HERE COME THE REINFORCEMENTS.
NO TIME TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THE OTHERS.
SE TACTICAL SENSORS
SITUATION ANALYSIS
Probability of survival based on applicable combat simulations:
OPTIONS
Assault 2%
Retreat.............. 9%
Surrender........... 21%
Auto Destruct.... 0%
7.11.0
IT'S UP TO ME.
I'M EITHER GOING TO SAVE US, OR GET US ALL KILLED.
WISH I KNEW WHICH.
OPEN HAILING FREQUENCIES, ALL CHANNELS.
ATTENTION, KREE FORCES.
THIS IS IRON MAN, REPRESENTING THE EARTH FORCE CALLED AVENGERS...


:UK:
I THINK THIS IS THE LAST OF 'EM, CAP.
:AK:
WELL DONE, PEOPLE.
TIME TO REGROUP AND ASSESS THE SITUATION.
IRON MAN SAID SOMETHING ABOUT--
UH, CAP...
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING HERE...
VRRRRRR
THAT BULKHEAD'S BEING OPENED FROM THE OTHER SIDE.
COMBAT POSITIONS!
IT MAY BE ANOTHER ASSAULT FORCE!
HAVEN'T THEY LEARNED YET?
WAIT-- IT LOOKS LIKE--
--NO--IT COULDN'T BE--!
INTRUDERS!
YOU ARE HEREBY UNDER ARREST FOR VIOLATING KREE TERRITORIES AND FACILITIES.
LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS!
DO AS THE MAN SAYS, PEOPLE.
ON BEHALF OF THE AVENGERS, I HAVE OFFICIALLY CONCEDED OUR SURRENDER TO THE KREE EMPIRE.


MOMENTS LATER...
BLAST YOU!
HOW COULD YOU BYPASS PROCEDURE LIKE THAT?!
YOU SHOULD HAVE CONSULTED ME.
IT WAS A JUDGMENT CALL.
IF I HAD WAITED, WE MIGHT ALL BE VAPOR BY NOW.
LOOK, THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF TIME TO ARGUE ABOUT THIS LATER.
ASSUMING WE SURVIVE...
NO TALKING.
NEXT ISSUE:
IRON MAN-- ALONE ON HALA!
THE TRIAL OF THE AVENGERS!
AND-- SPECIAL GUEST VILLAIN: RONAN THE ACCUSER!
FOR THE NEXT STAR-SPANNING CHAPTER OF OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM, DON'T MISS THOR #445, ON SALE NOW!

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PART 7
THE MIGHTY
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FROM THE PAGES OF X-MEN®
CAN EVEN THE POWER OF THE THUNDER GOD DEFEAT
GLADIATOR ?!
THE
WAR
AND THE
WARRIOR!

[redacted]

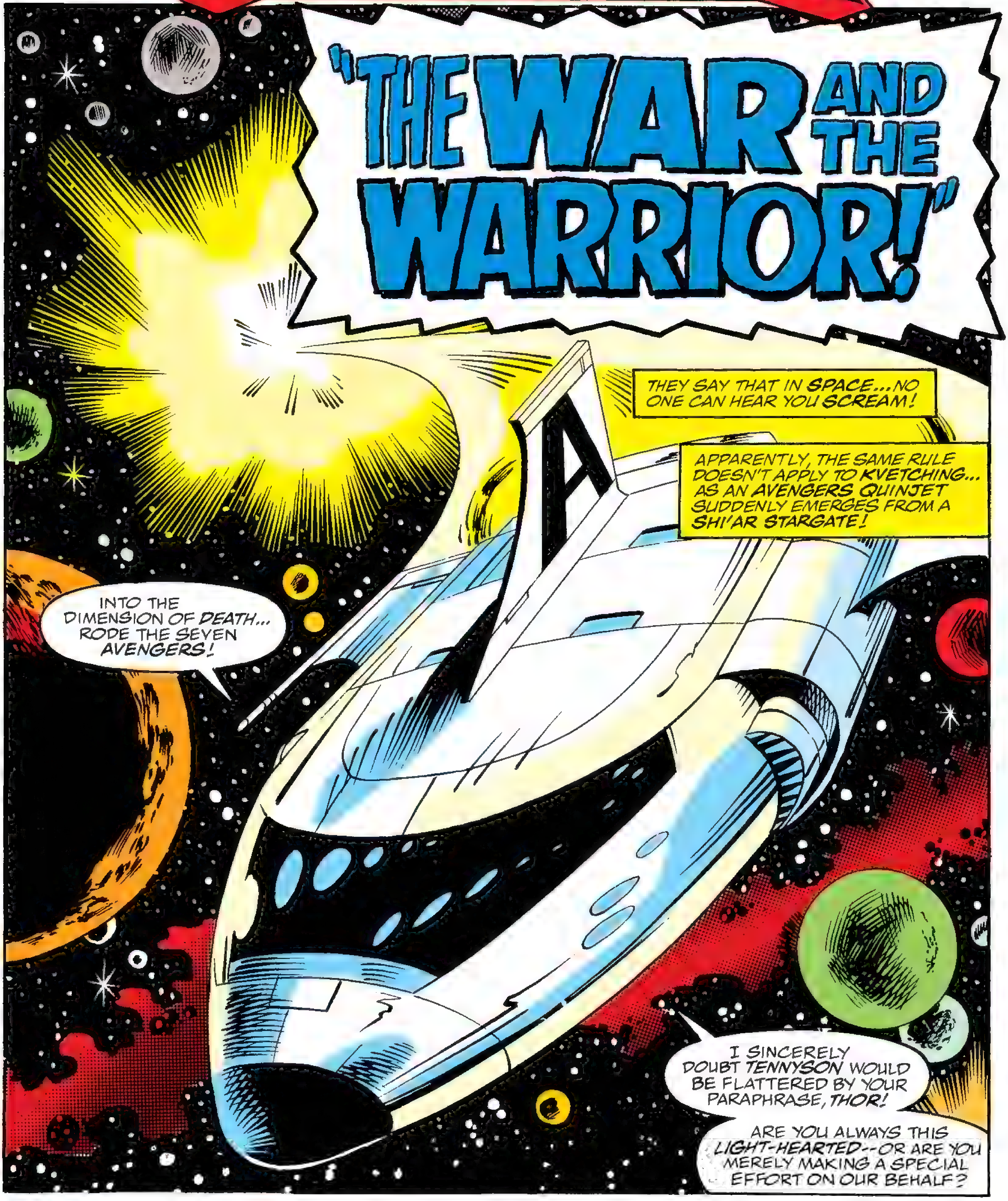
TWO GALACTIC EMPIRES — THE MILITARISTIC **KREE** AND THE MATRIARCHAL **SHI'AR** — ARE AT WAR, AND THE EARTH IS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE. TWO TEAMS OF **AVENGERS** HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE TWO HEADS OF STATE. HEADING TOWARD THE SHI'AR EMPIRE ARE CAPTAIN MARVEL, THE VISION, WONDER MAN, LIVING LIGHTNING, SCARLET WITCH, STARFOX, AND THE **MIGHTY THOR!**

STAN LEE PRESENTS. . .

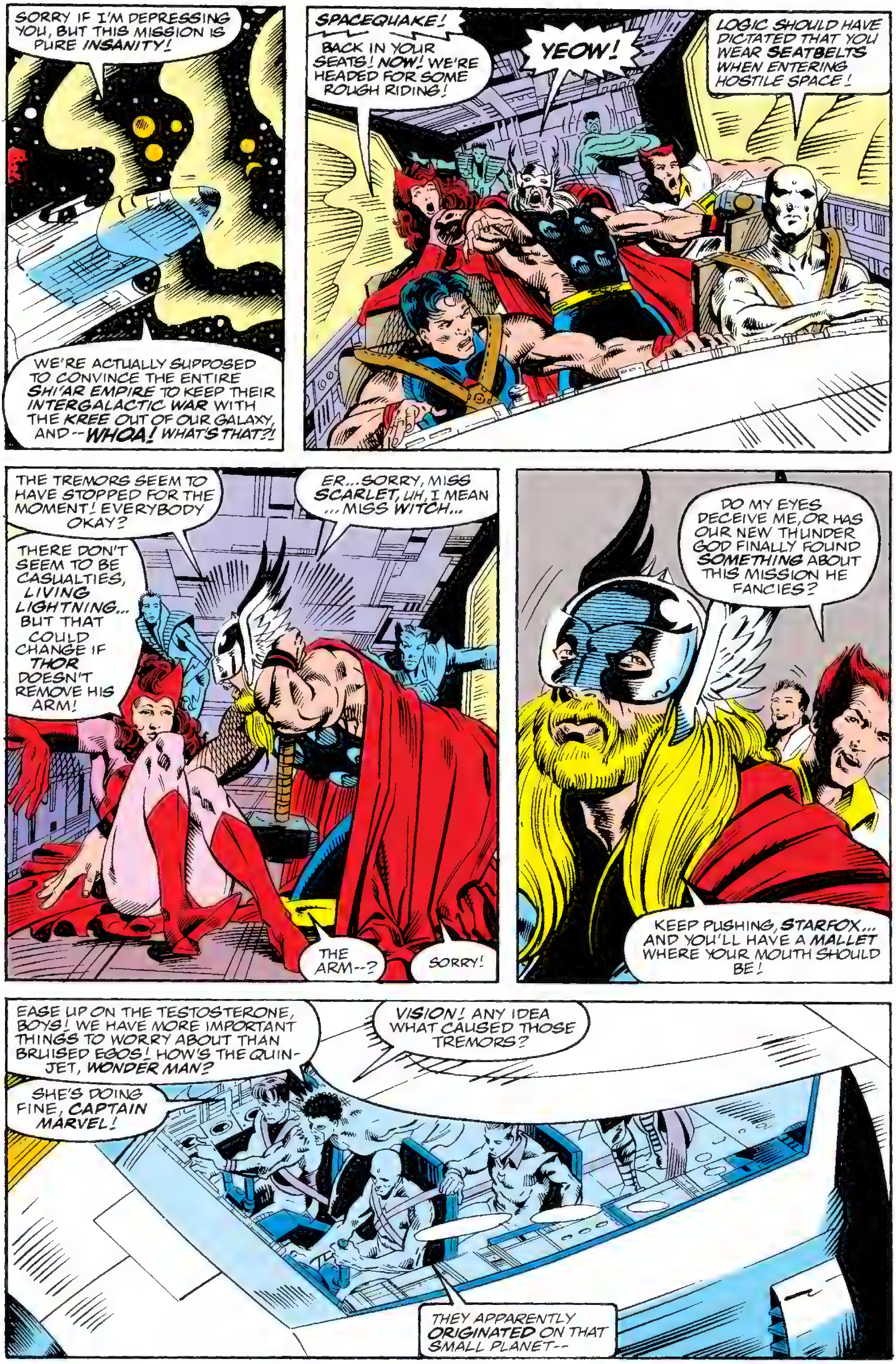
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

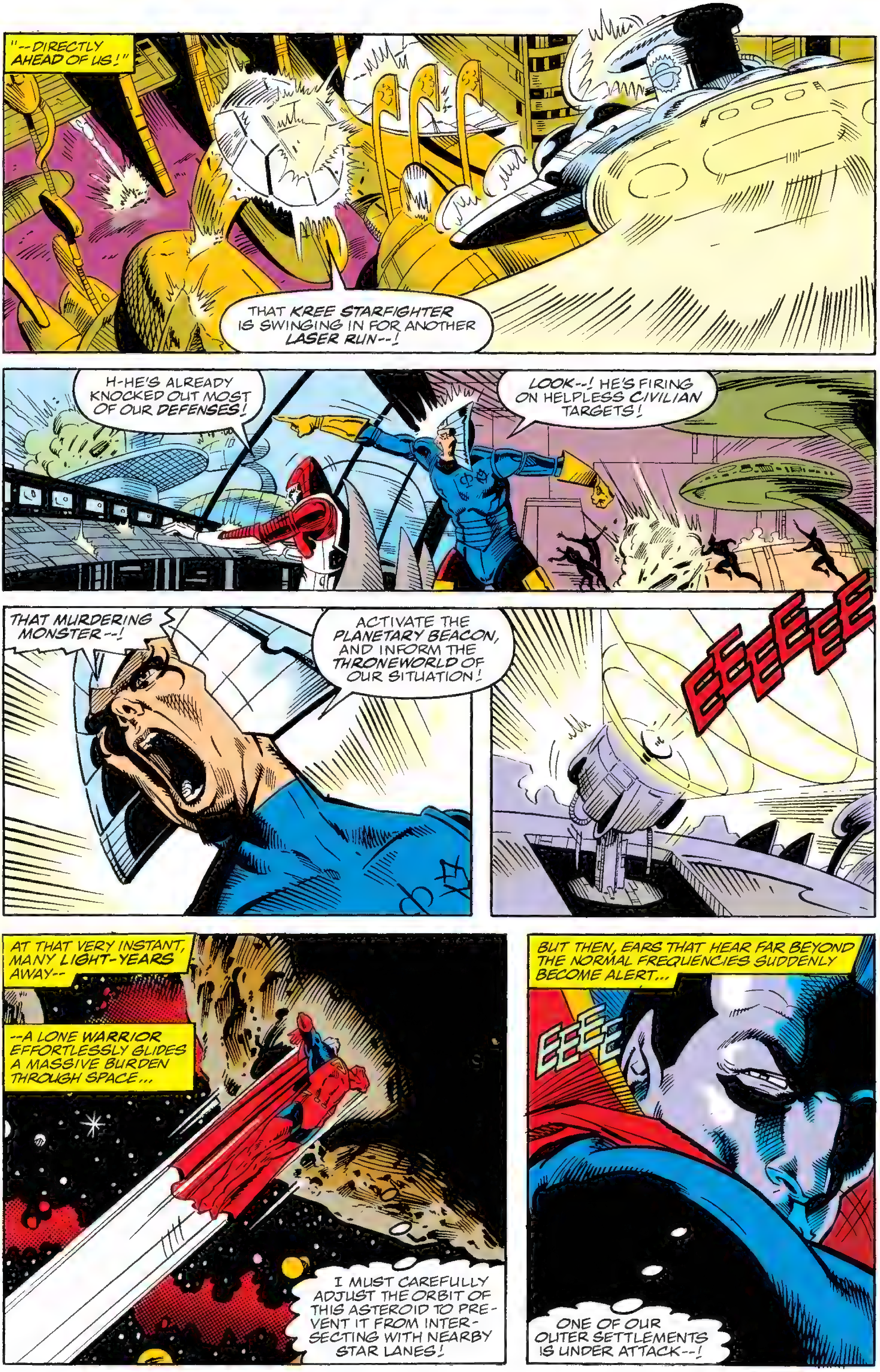
PART 7

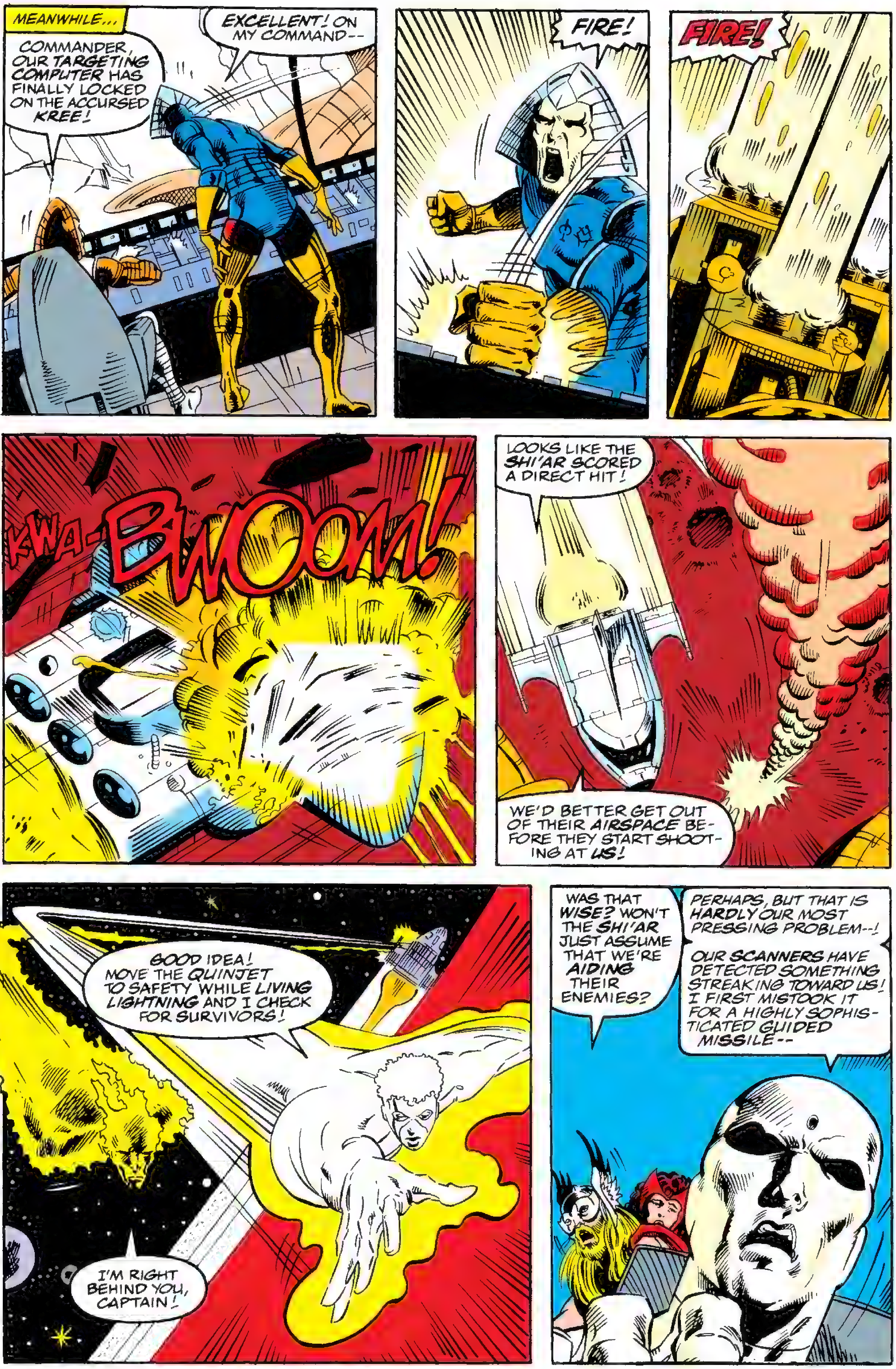
THE MIGHTY THOR

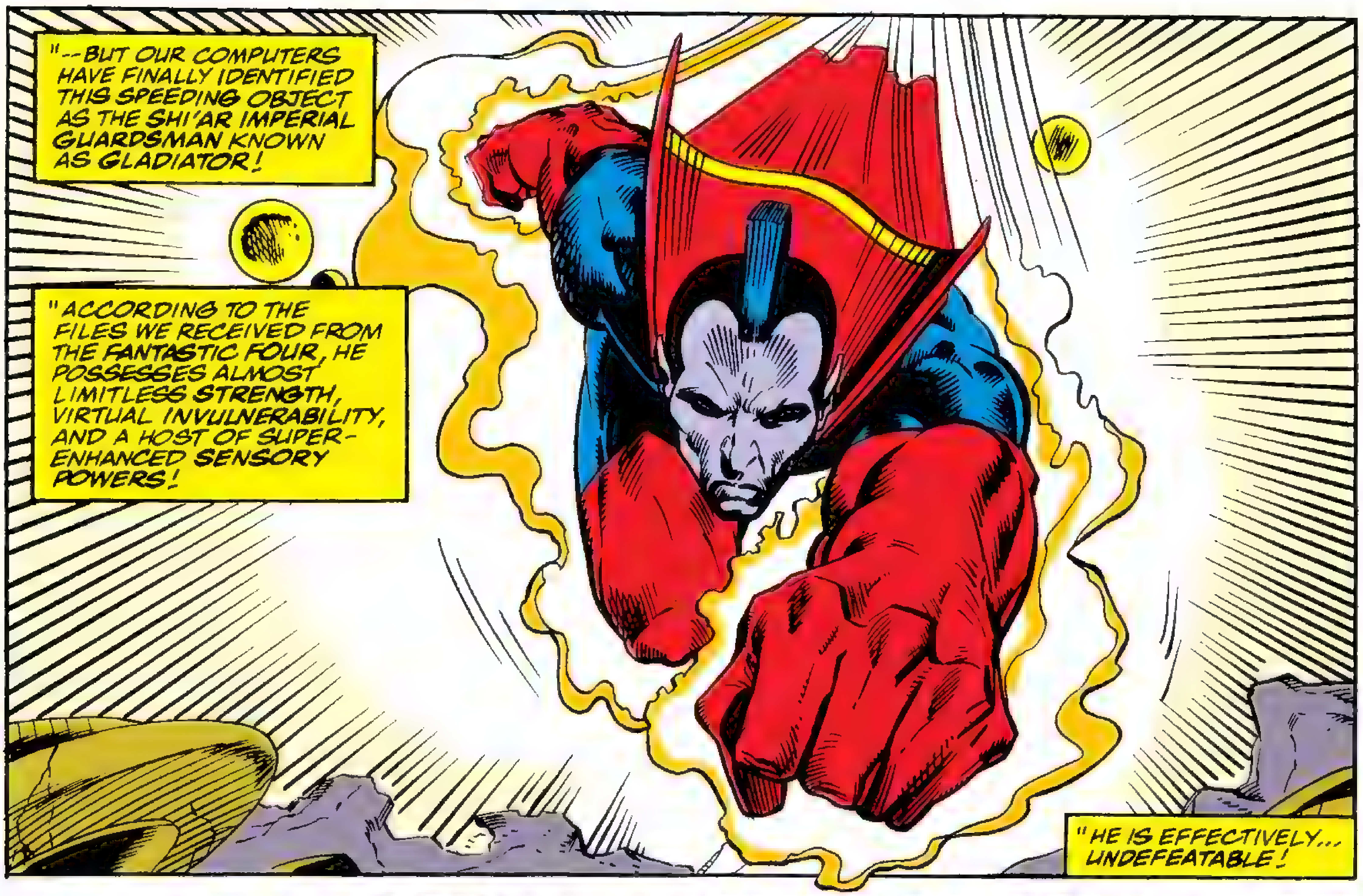

"THE WAR AND THE WARRIOR!"
THEY SAY THAT IN SPACE...NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM!
APPARENTLY, THE SAME RULE DOESN'T APPLY TO KVETCHING... AS AN AVENGERS QUINJET SUDDENLY EMERGES FROM A SHI'AR STARGATE!
INTO THE DIMENSION OF DEATH... RODE THE SEVEN AVENGERS!
I SINCERELY DOUBT TENNYSON WOULD BE FLATTERED BY YOUR PARAPHRASE, THOR!
ARE YOU ALWAYS THIS LIGHT-HEARTED--OR ARE YOU MERELY MAKING A SPECIAL EFFORT ON OUR BEHALF?

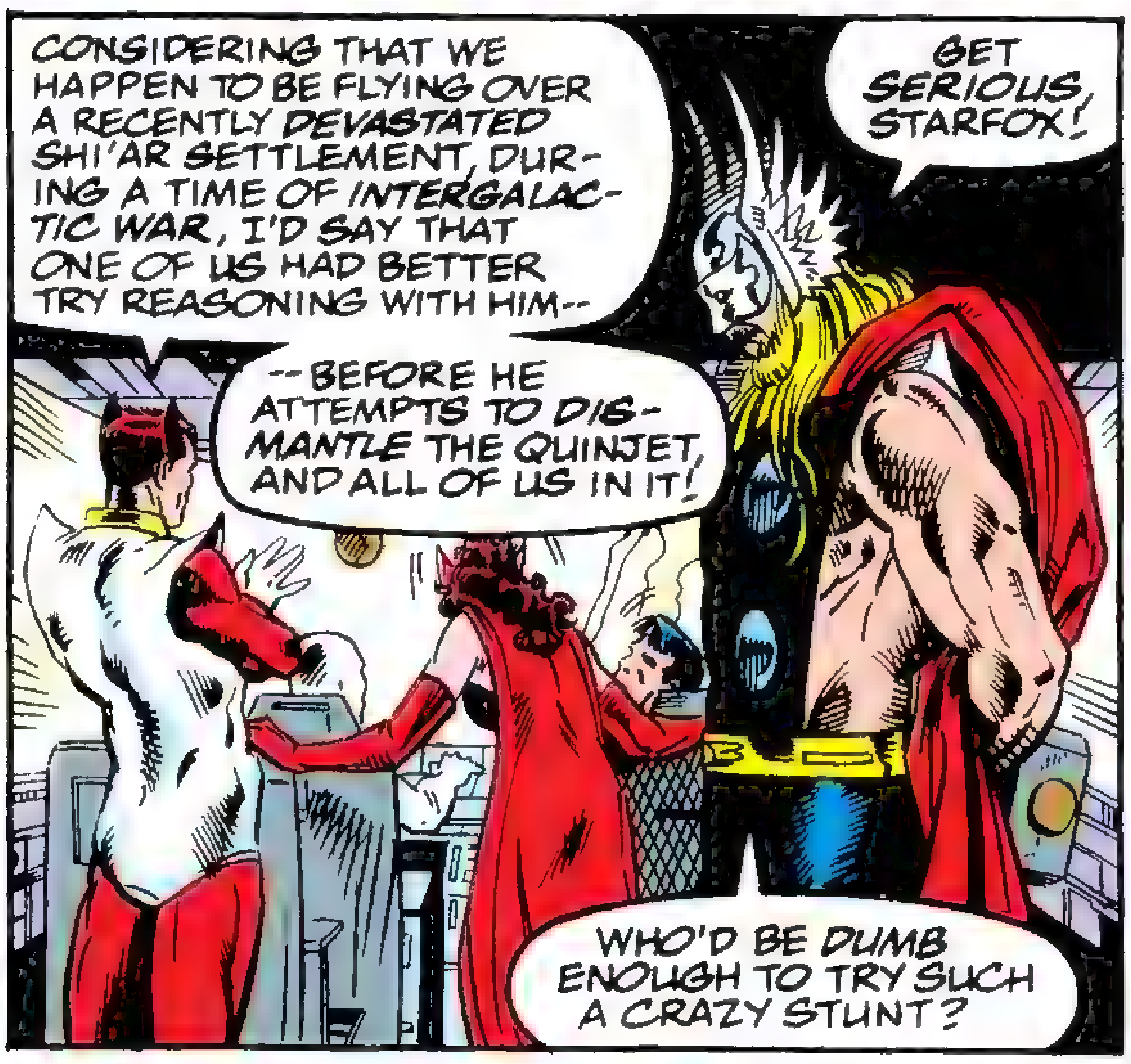
TOM DeFALCO STORY · PATRICK OLLIFFE PENCILS · AL MILGROM INKS · MICHAEL HEISLER LETTERS · MIKE ROCKWITZ COLORS · RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR

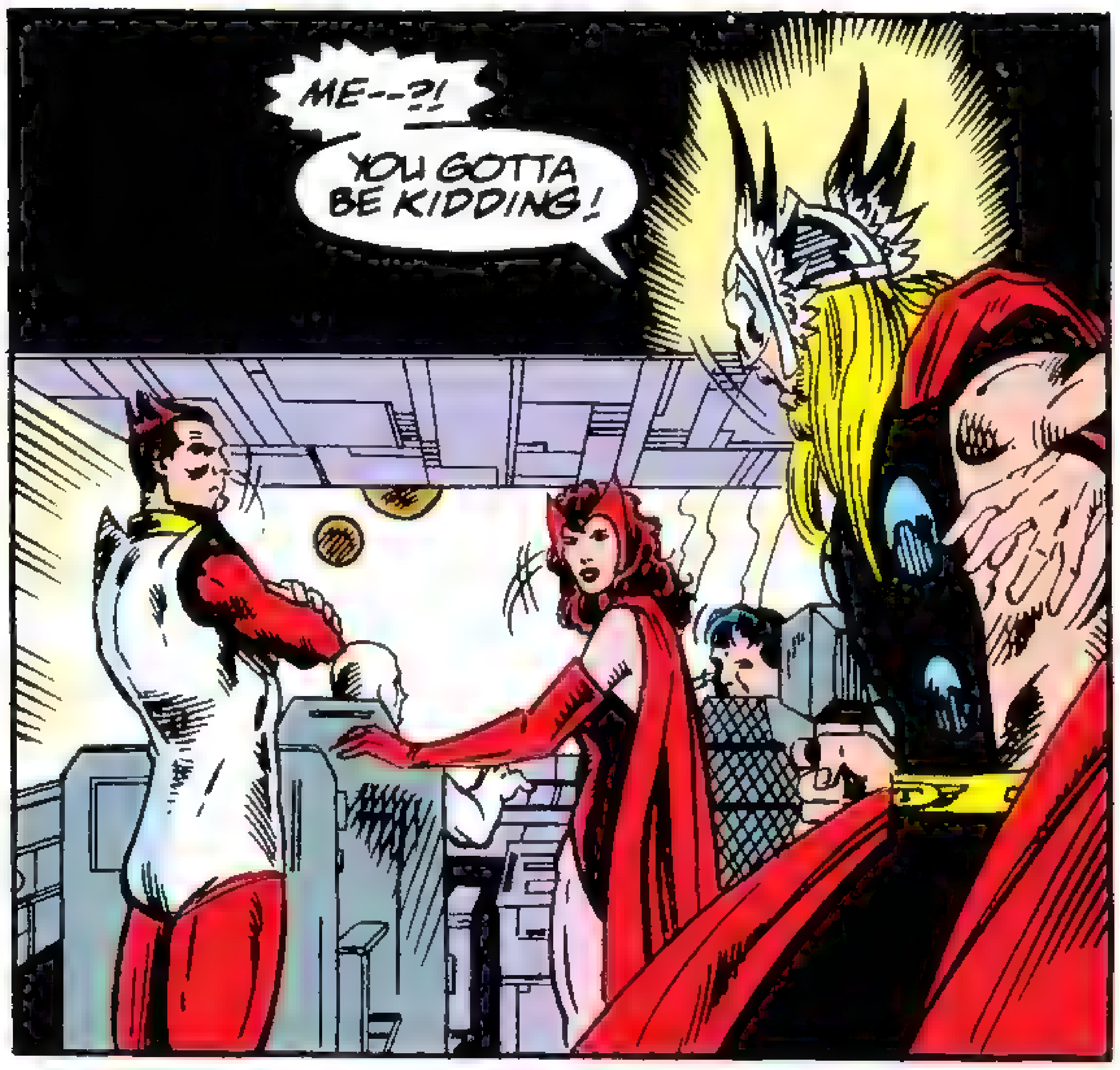

SORRY IF I'M DEPRESSING YOU, BUT THIS MISSION IS PURE *INSANITY!*
WE'RE ACTUALLY SUPPOSED TO CONVINCE THE ENTIRE ***SHI'AR EMPIRE*** TO KEEP THEIR ***INTERGALACTIC WAR*** WITH THE ***KREE*** OUT OF OUR GALAXY, AND--***WHOA!*** WHAT'S THAT?!
SPACEQUAKE!
BACK IN YOUR SEATS! ***NOW!*** WE'RE HEADED FOR SOME ROUGH RIDING!
YEOW!
LOGIC SHOULD HAVE DICTATED THAT YOU WEAR ***SEATBELTS*** *WHEN ENTERING HOSTILE SPACE!*
THE TREMORS SEEM TO HAVE STOPPED FOR THE MOMENT! EVERYBODY OKAY?
THERE DON'T SEEM TO BE CASUALTIES, ***LIVING LIGHTNING...*** BUT THAT COULD CHANGE IF ***THOR*** DOESN'T REMOVE HIS ARM!
ER...SORRY, MISS ***SCARLET,*** *UH, I MEAN ...MISS* ***WITCH...***
THE ARM--?
SORRY!
DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME, OR HAS OUR NEW THUNDER GOD FINALLY FOUND ***SOMETHING*** ABOUT THIS MISSION HE FANCIES?
KEEP PUSHING, ***STARFOX...*** AND YOU'LL HAVE A ***MALLET*** WHERE YOUR MOUTH SHOULD BE!
EASE UP ON THE TESTOSTERONE, BOYS! WE HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT THAN BRUISED EGOS! HOW'S THE QUINJET, ***WONDER MAN?***
SHE'S DOING FINE, ***CAPTAIN MARVEL!***
VISION! ANY IDEA WHAT CAUSED THOSE TREMORS?
THEY APPARENTLY ***ORIGINATED*** *ON THAT SMALL PLANET--*

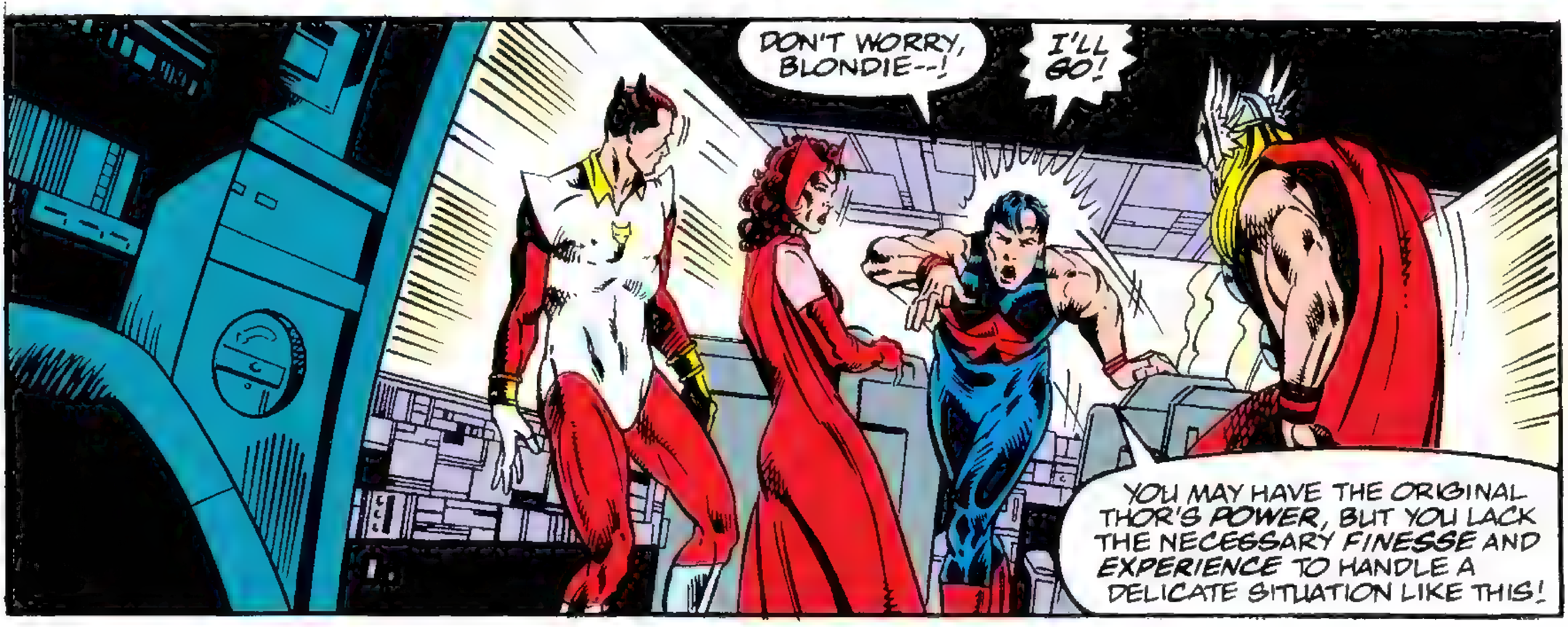

"--DIRECTLY AHEAD OF US!"
THAT KREE STARFIGHTER IS SWINGING IN FOR ANOTHER LASER RUN--!
H-HE'S ALREADY KNOCKED OUT MOST OF OUR DEFENSES!
LOOK--! HE'S FIRING ON HELPLESS CIVILIAN TARGETS!
THAT MURDERING MONSTER--!
ACTIVATE THE PLANETARY BEACON, AND INFORM THE THRONEWORLD OF OUR SITUATION!
EEEEEEE
AT THAT VERY INSTANT, MANY LIGHT-YEARS AWAY--
--A LONE WARRIOR EFFORTLESSLY GLIDES A MASSIVE BURDEN THROUGH SPACE...
I MUST CAREFULLY ADJUST THE ORBIT OF THIS ASTEROID TO PREVENT IT FROM INTERSECTING WITH NEARBY STAR LANES!
BUT THEN, EARS THAT HEAR FAR BEYOND THE NORMAL FREQUENCIES SUDDENLY BECOME ALERT...
EEEE
ONE OF OUR OUTER SETTLEMENTS IS UNDER ATTACK--!


MEANWHILE...
COMMANDER, OUR TARGETING COMPUTER HAS FINALLY LOCKED ON THE ACCURSED KREE!
EXCELLENT! ON MY COMMAND--
FIRE!
FIRE!
KWA-BWOOM!
LOOKS LIKE THE SHI'AR SCORED A DIRECT HIT!
WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF THEIR AIRSPACE BEFORE THEY START SHOOTING AT US!
GOOD IDEA! MOVE THE QUINJET TO SAFETY WHILE LIVING LIGHTNING AND I CHECK FOR SURVIVORS!
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, CAPTAIN!
WAS THAT WISE? WON'T THE SHI'AR JUST ASSUME THAT WE'RE AIDING THEIR ENEMIES?
PERHAPS, BUT THAT IS HARDLY OUR MOST PRESSING PROBLEM--!
OUR SCANNERS HAVE DETECTED SOMETHING STREAKING TOWARD US! I FIRST MISTOOK IT FOR A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED GUIDED MISSILE--

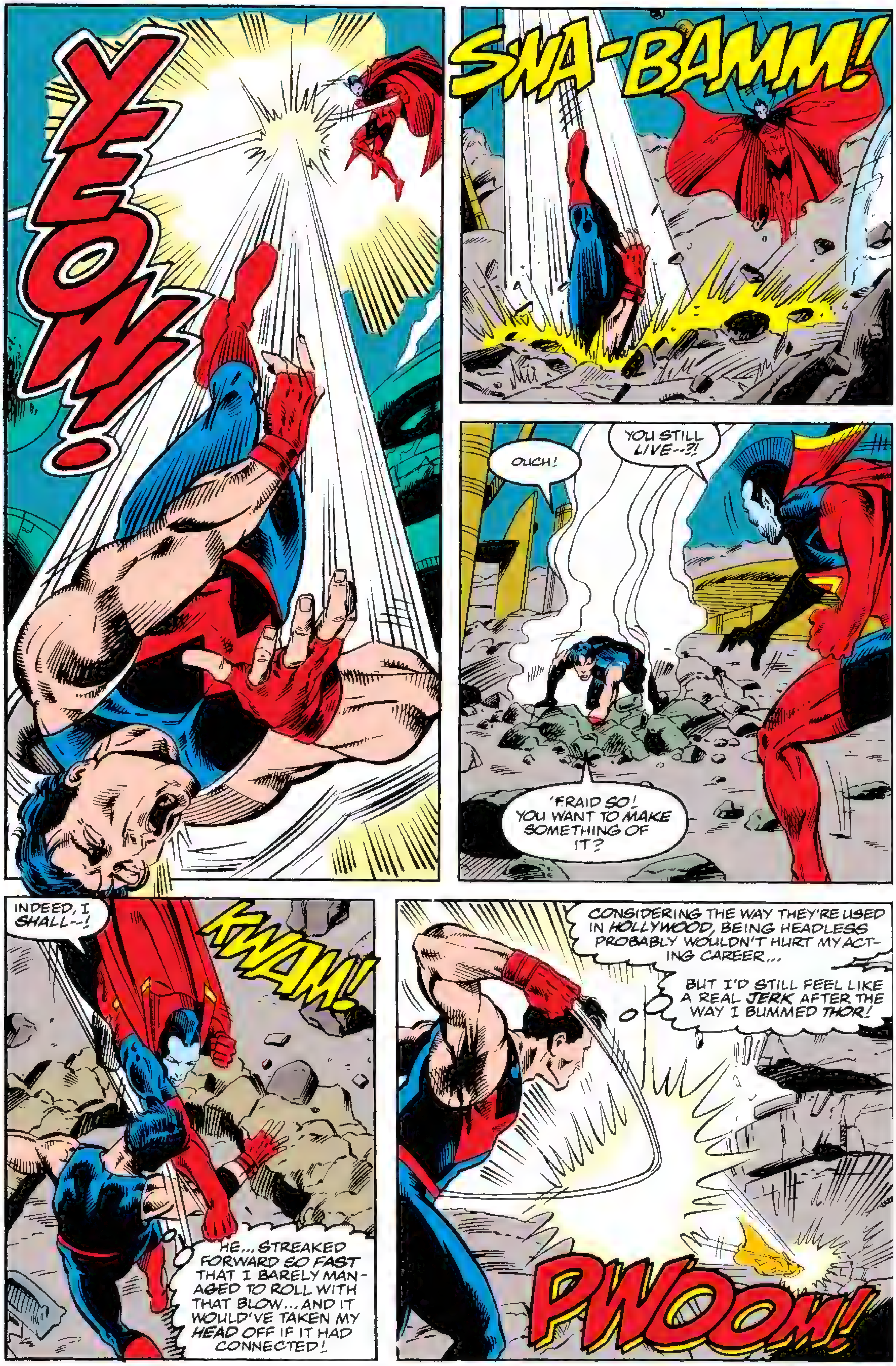

"--BUT OUR COMPUTERS HAVE FINALLY IDENTIFIED THIS SPEEDING OBJECT AS THE SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARDSMAN KNOWN AS GLADIATOR!
"ACCORDING TO THE FILES WE RECEIVED FROM THE FANTASTIC FOUR, HE POSSESSES ALMOST LIMITLESS STRENGTH, VIRTUAL INVULNERABILITY, AND A HOST OF SUPER-ENHANCED SENSORY POWERS!
"HE IS EFFECTIVELY... UNDEFEATABLE!

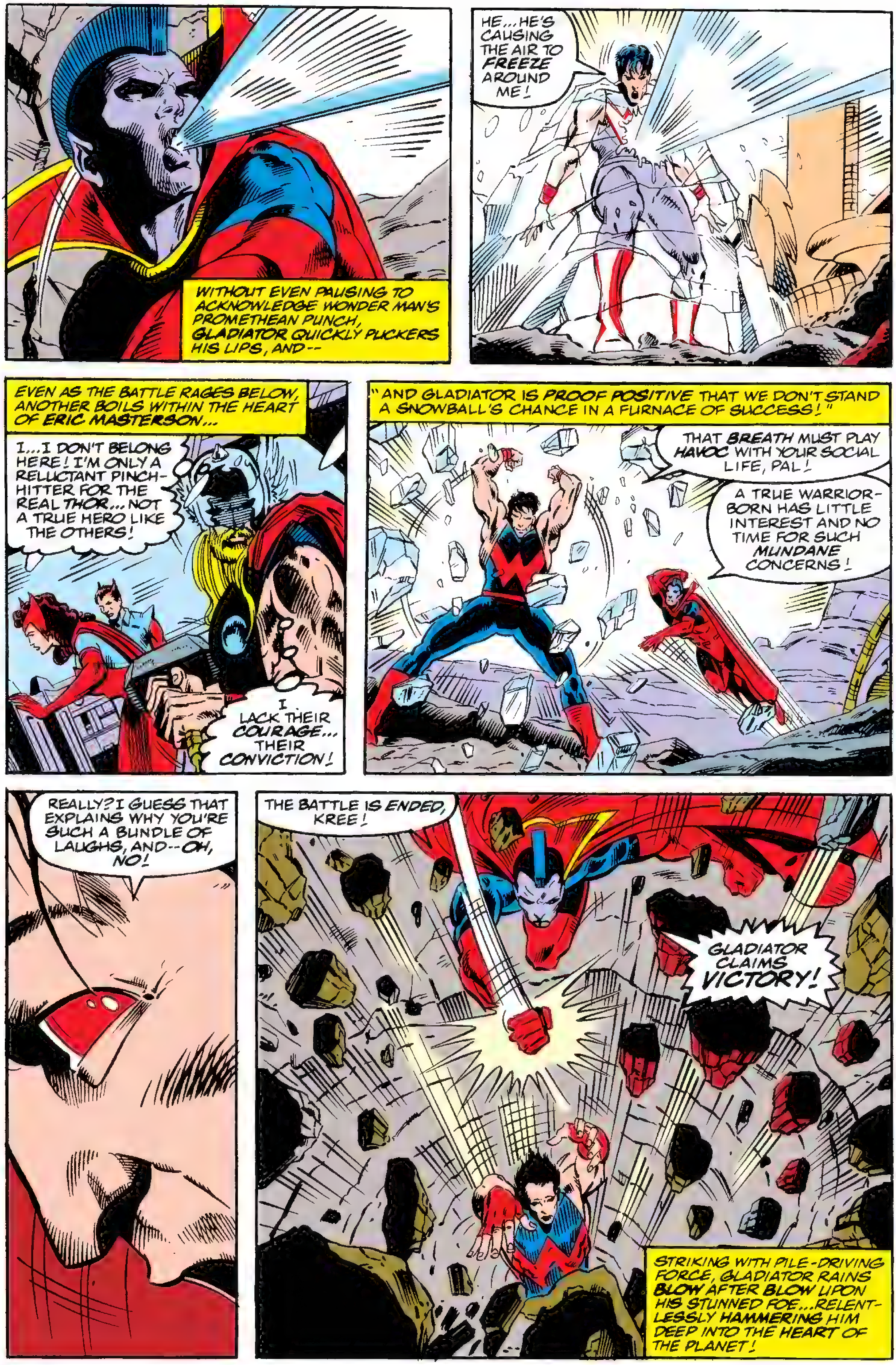

CONSIDERING THAT WE HAPPEN TO BE FLYING OVER A RECENTLY DEVASTATED SHI'AR SETTLEMENT, DURING A TIME OF INTERGALACTIC WAR, I'D SAY THAT ONE OF US HAD BETTER TRY REASONING WITH HIM--
GET SERIOUS, STARFOX!
--BEFORE HE ATTEMPTS TO DISMANTLE THE QUINJET, AND ALL OF US IN IT!
WHO'D BE DUMB ENOUGH TO TRY SUCH A CRAZY STUNT?

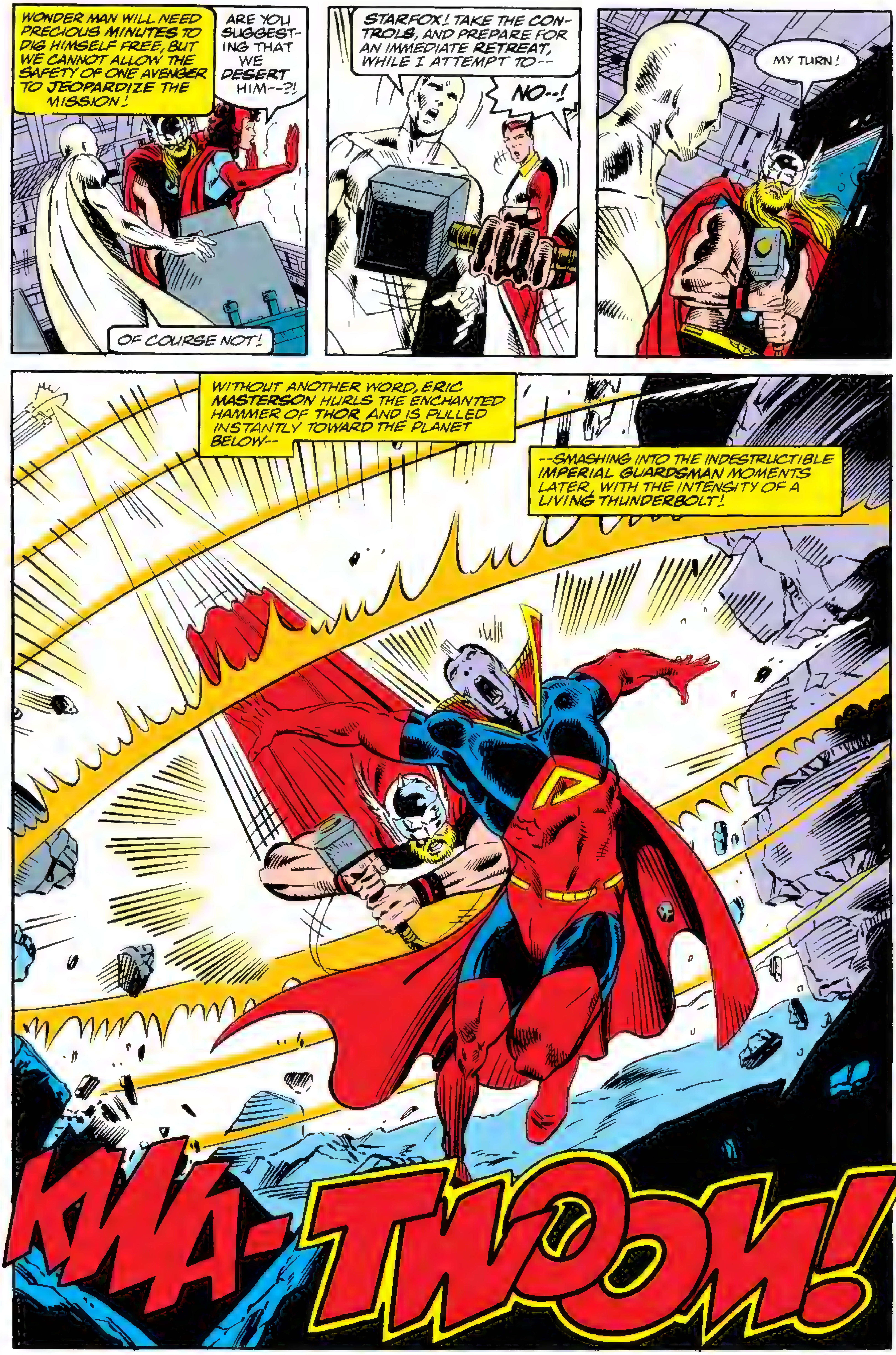

ME--?!
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!

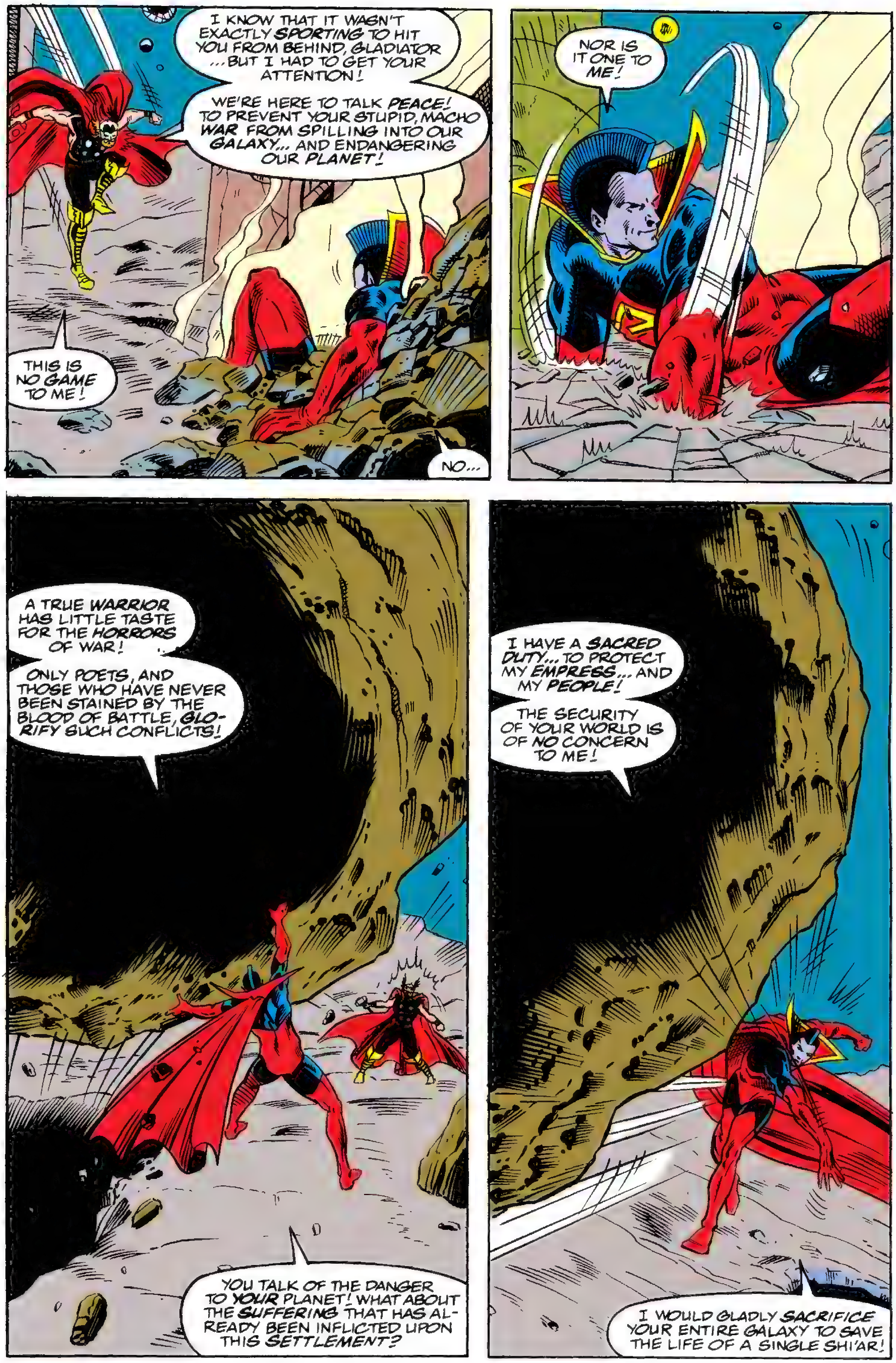

DON'T WORRY, BLONDIE--!
I'LL GO!
YOU MAY HAVE THE ORIGINAL THOR'S POWER, BUT YOU LACK THE NECESSARY FINESSE AND EXPERIENCE TO HANDLE A DELICATE SITUATION LIKE THIS!

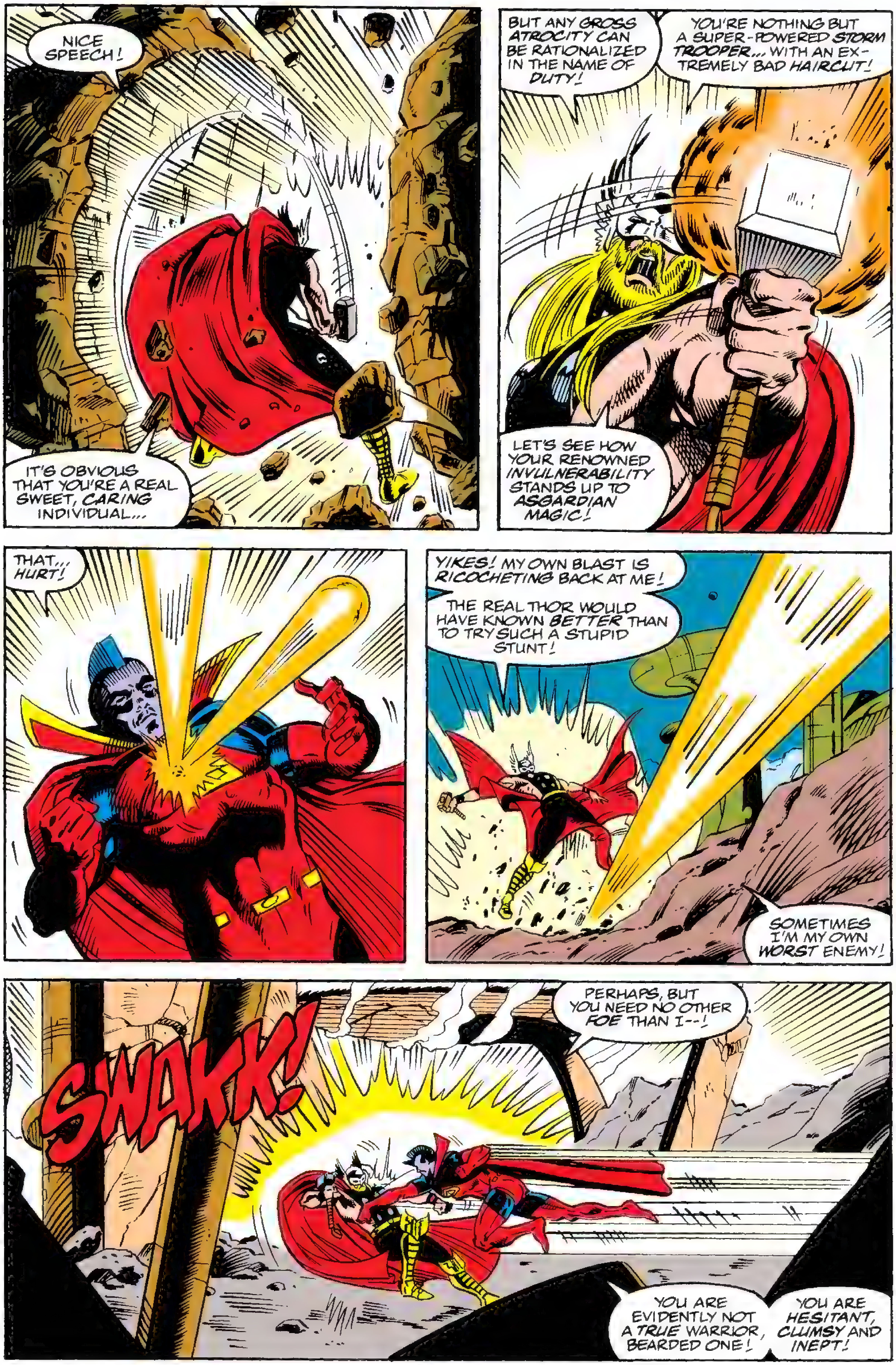
MOMENTS LATER...
I HATE WEARING THIS OLD JET-PACK, BUT I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF CHOICE SINCE I RECENTLY LOST MY BELT-JETS!
MAYBE I CAME DOWN TOO HARD ON THE NEW THOR!
THE POOR GUY IS SO OBVIOUSLY OUT OF HIS DEPTH!
SOME DISTANCE AWAY, A CAPED FIGURE HOVERS HIGH ABOVE THE SMOKING SETTLEMENT--
--AND SCANS THE DESTRUCTION WITH EYES WHOSE VISION CAN PENETRATE THE DENSEST MATTER.
A FURY, EVEN COLDER THAN THE DARK VOID OF SPACE, HARDENS WITHIN HIM!
A FURY WHICH WILL SOON FIND RELEASE--!
HEY, GLADIATOR--! WE HAVE TO TALK!
I REPRESENT A NEGOTIATING TEAM FROM THE PLANET EARTH!
YOU MUST THINK ME A FOOL TO FALL FOR SUCH AN OBVIOUS TRICK!
THERE WILL BE NO NEGOTIATIONS WHILE MY PEOPLE LAY HURT AND DYING FROM YOUR COWARDLY ATTACK, MAN OF THE KREE!
MOLTEN HEAT SUDDENLY FLARES FROM GLADIATOR'S EYES!
HEY! MY JETPACK--!
CARRIED FORWARD BY MOMENTUM ALONE, WONDER MAN QUICKLY LOSES SPEED, AND THEN...
UH-OH!

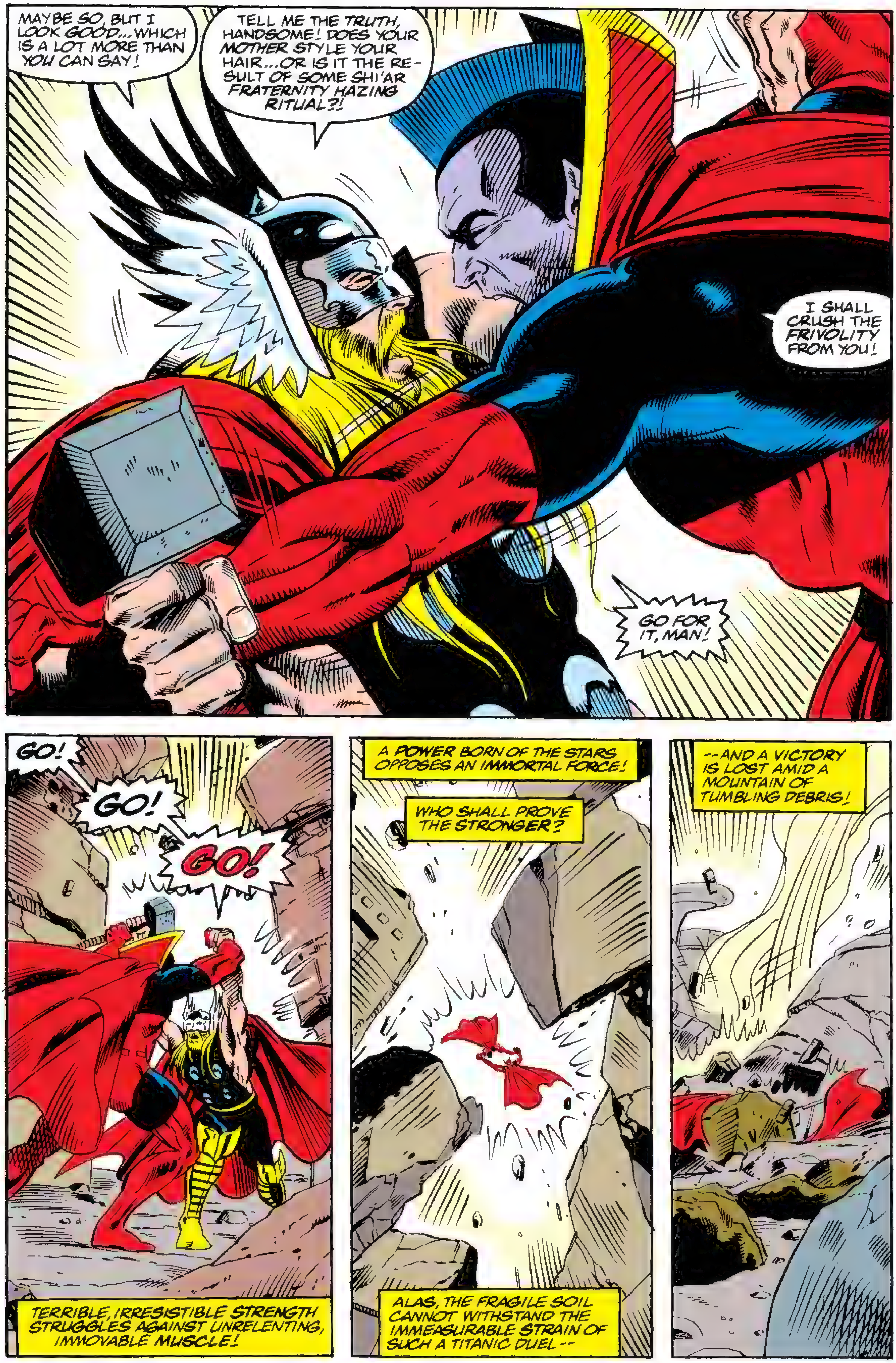

YEOW!
SNA-BAMM!
OUCH!
YOU STILL LIVE--?!
'FRAID SO! YOU WANT TO MAKE SOMETHING OF IT?
INDEED, I SHALL--!
KWAM!
HE... STREAKED FORWARD SO FAST THAT I BARELY MANAGED TO ROLL WITH THAT BLOW... AND IT WOULD'VE TAKEN MY HEAD OFF IF IT HAD CONNECTED!
CONSIDERING THE WAY THEY'RE USED IN HOLLYWOOD, BEING HEADLESS PROBABLY WOULDN'T HURT MY ACTING CAREER...
BUT I'D STILL FEEL LIKE A REAL JERK AFTER THE WAY I BUMMED THOR!
PWOOM!

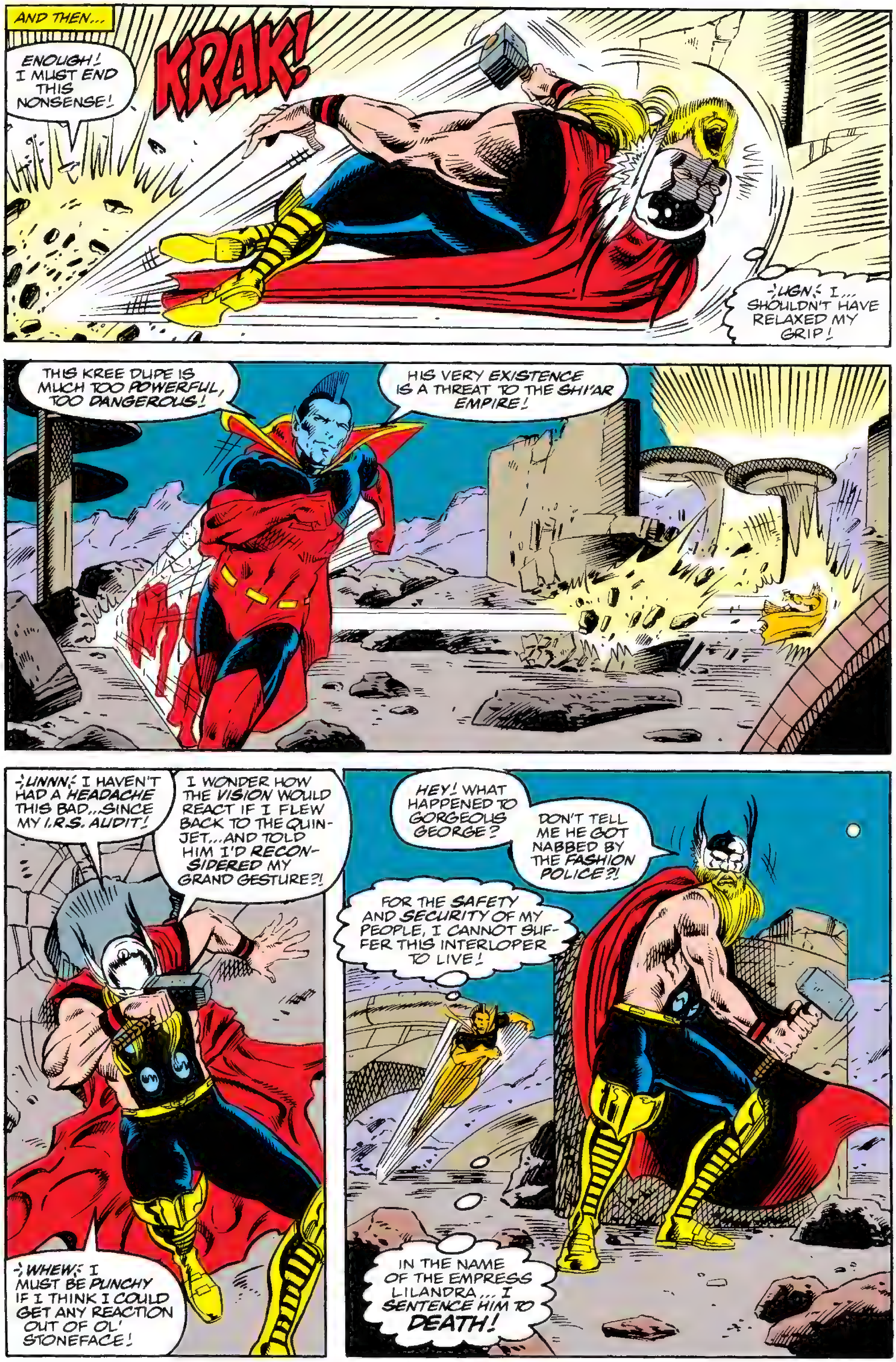

WITHOUT EVEN PAUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE WONDER MAN'S PROMETHEAN PUNCH, GLADIATOR QUICKLY PUCKERS HIS LIPS, AND--
HE...HE'S CAUSING THE AIR TO FREEZE AROUND ME!
EVEN AS THE BATTLE RAGES BELOW, ANOTHER BOILS WITHIN THE HEART OF ERIC MASTERSON...
I...I DON'T BELONG HERE! I'M ONLY A RELUCTANT PINCH-HITTER FOR THE REAL THOR... NOT A TRUE HERO LIKE THE OTHERS!
I LACK THEIR COURAGE... THEIR CONVICTION!
"AND GLADIATOR IS PROOF POSITIVE THAT WE DON'T STAND A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE IN A FURNACE OF SUCCESS!"
THAT BREATH MUST PLAY HAVOC WITH YOUR SOCIAL LIFE, PAL!
A TRUE WARRIOR-BORN HAS LITTLE INTEREST AND NO TIME FOR SUCH MUNDANE CONCERNS!
REALLY? I GUESS THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOU'RE SUCH A BUNDLE OF LAUGHS, AND--OH, NO!
THE BATTLE IS ENDED, KREE!
GLADIATOR CLAIMS VICTORY!
STRIKING WITH PILE-DRIVING FORCE, GLADIATOR RAINS BLOW AFTER BLOW UPON HIS STUNNED FOE...RELENTLESSLY HAMMERING HIM DEEP INTO THE HEART OF THE PLANET!

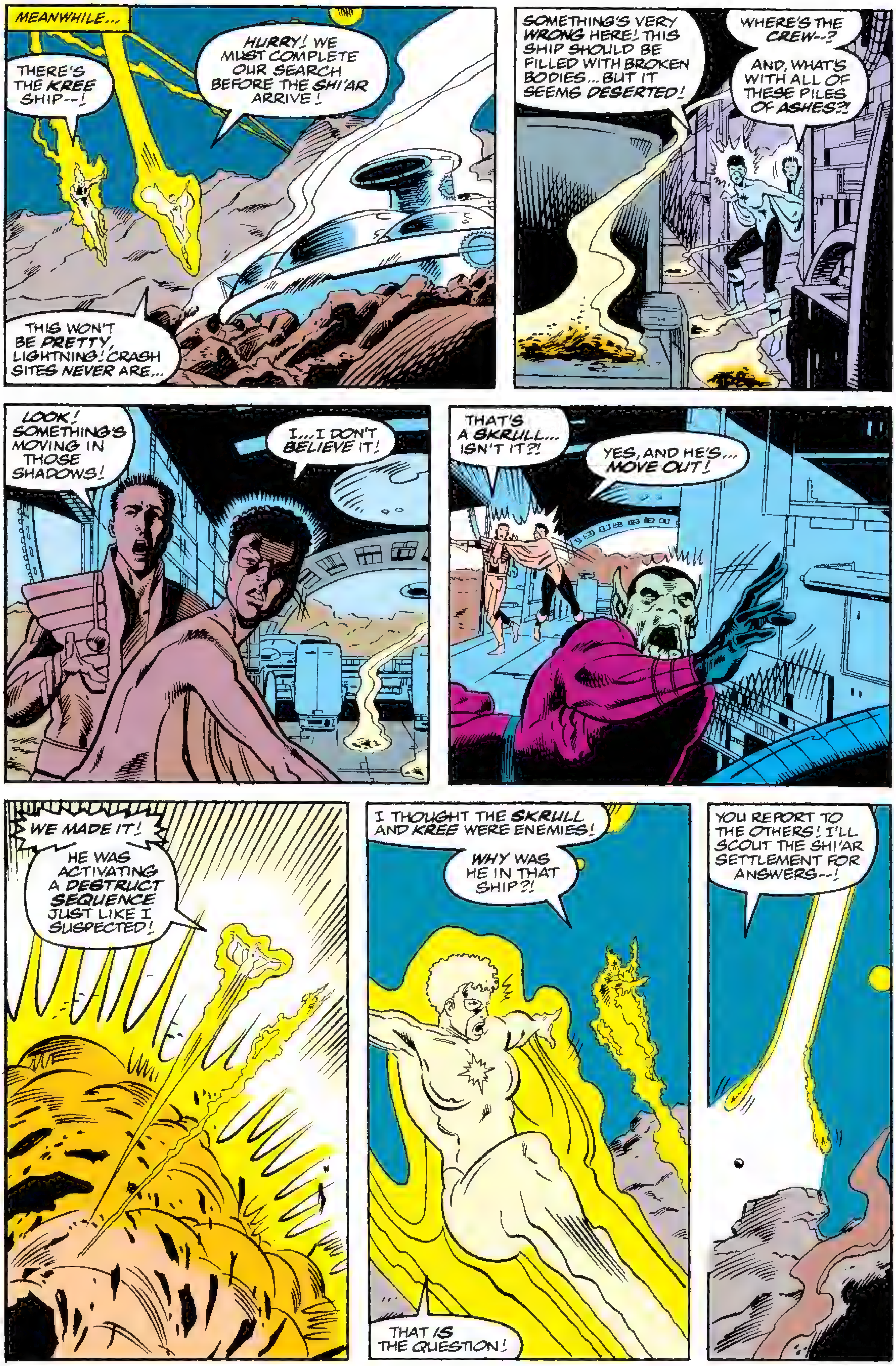

WONDER MAN WILL NEED PRECIOUS MINUTES TO DIG HIMSELF FREE, BUT WE CANNOT ALLOW THE SAFETY OF ONE AVENGER TO JEOPARDIZE THE MISSION!
ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT WE DESERT HIM--?!
OF COURSE NOT!
STARFOX! TAKE THE CONTROLS, AND PREPARE FOR AN IMMEDIATE RETREAT, WHILE I ATTEMPT TO--
NO--!
MY TURN!
WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, ERIC MASTERSON HURLS THE ENCHANTED HAMMER OF THOR AND IS PULLED INSTANTLY TOWARD THE PLANET BELOW--
--SMASHING INTO THE INDESTRUCTIBLE IMPERIAL GUARDSMAN MOMENTS LATER, WITH THE INTENSITY OF A LIVING THUNDERBOLT!
KWA-THOOM!

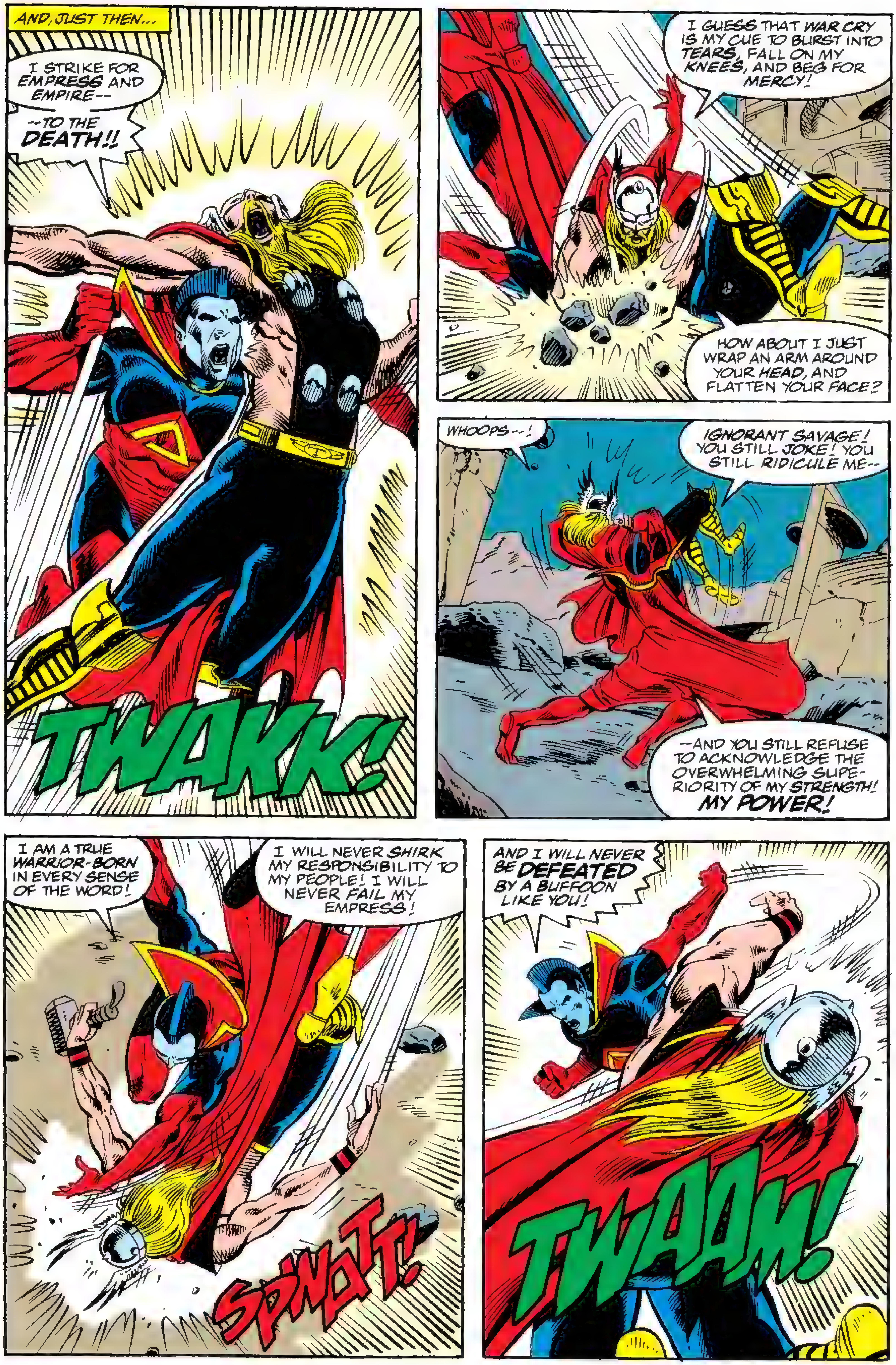

I KNOW THAT IT WASN'T EXACTLY *SPORTING* TO HIT YOU FROM BEHIND, GLADIATOR ...BUT I HAD TO GET YOUR ATTENTION!
WE'RE HERE TO TALK *PEACE!* TO PREVENT YOUR STUPID, MACHO *WAR* FROM SPILLING INTO OUR *GALAXY...* AND ENDANGERING OUR *PLANET!*
THIS IS NO *GAME* TO ME!
NO...
NOR IS IT ONE TO *ME!*
A TRUE *WARRIOR* HAS LITTLE TASTE FOR THE *HORRORS* OF WAR!
ONLY POETS, AND THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN STAINED BY THE BLOOD OF BATTLE, *GLORIFY* SUCH CONFLICTS!
YOU TALK OF THE DANGER TO *YOUR* PLANET! WHAT ABOUT THE *SUFFERING* THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN INFLICTED UPON THIS *SETTLEMENT?*
I HAVE A *SACRED DUTY...* TO PROTECT MY *EMPRESS...* AND MY *PEOPLE!*
THE SECURITY OF YOUR WORLD IS OF *NO* CONCERN TO ME!
I WOULD GLADLY *SACRIFICE* YOUR ENTIRE *GALAXY* TO *SAVE* THE LIFE OF A SINGLE SHI'AR!

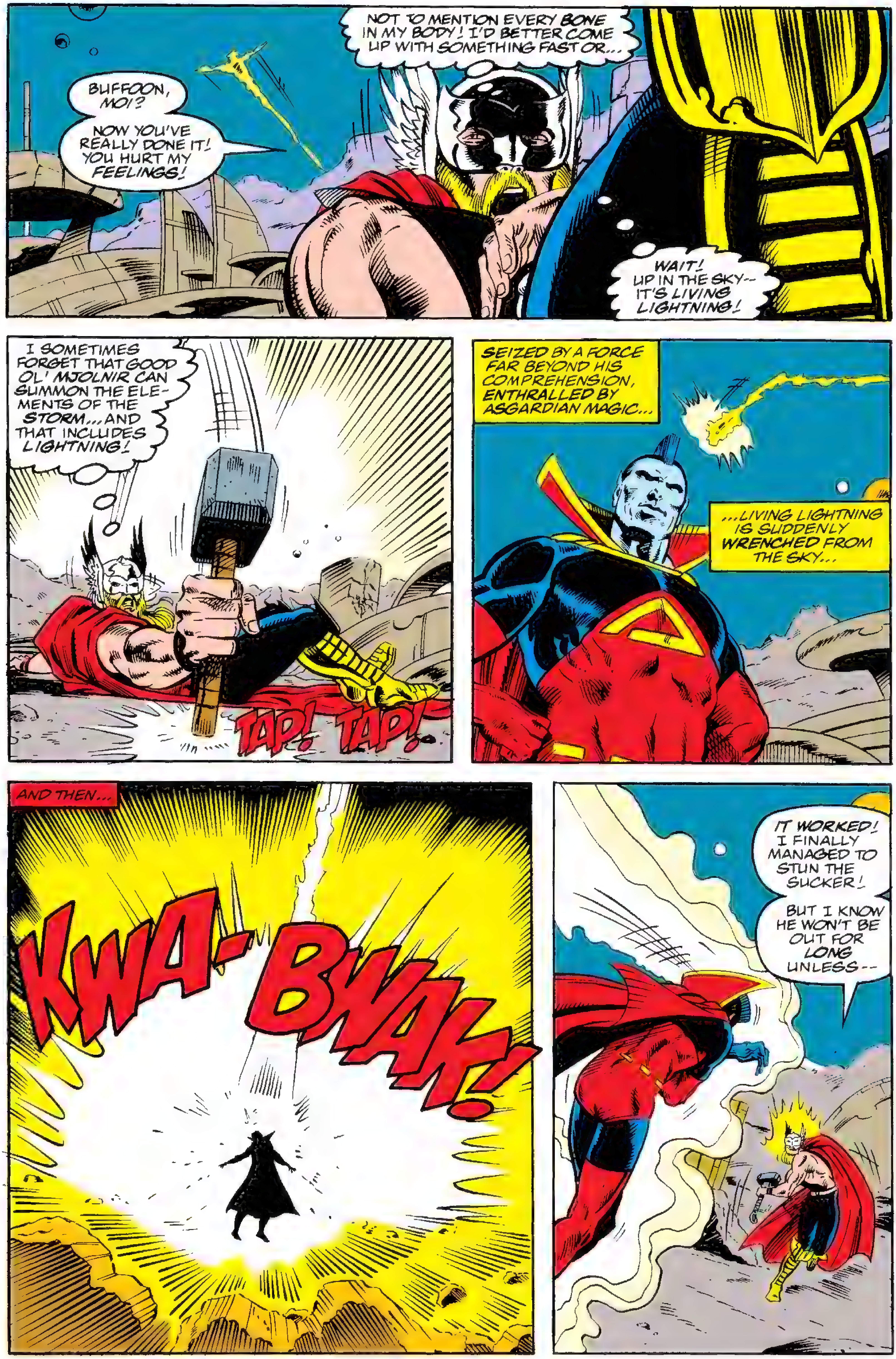

NICE SPEECH!
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU'RE A REAL SWEET, CARING INDIVIDUAL...
BUT ANY GROSS ATROCITY CAN BE RATIONALIZED IN THE NAME OF DUTY!
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A SUPER-POWERED STORM TROOPER... WITH AN EXTREMELY BAD HAIRCUT!
LET'S SEE HOW YOUR RENOWNED INVULNERABILITY STANDS UP TO ASGARDIAN MAGIC!
THAT... HURT!
YIKES! MY OWN BLAST IS RICOCHETING BACK AT ME!
THE REAL THOR WOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO TRY SUCH A STUPID STUNT!
SOMETIMES I'M MY OWN WORST ENEMY!
SWAKK!
PERHAPS, BUT YOU NEED NO OTHER FOE THAN I--!
YOU ARE EVIDENTLY NOT A TRUE WARRIOR, BEARDED ONE!
YOU ARE HESITANT, CLUMSY AND INEPT!

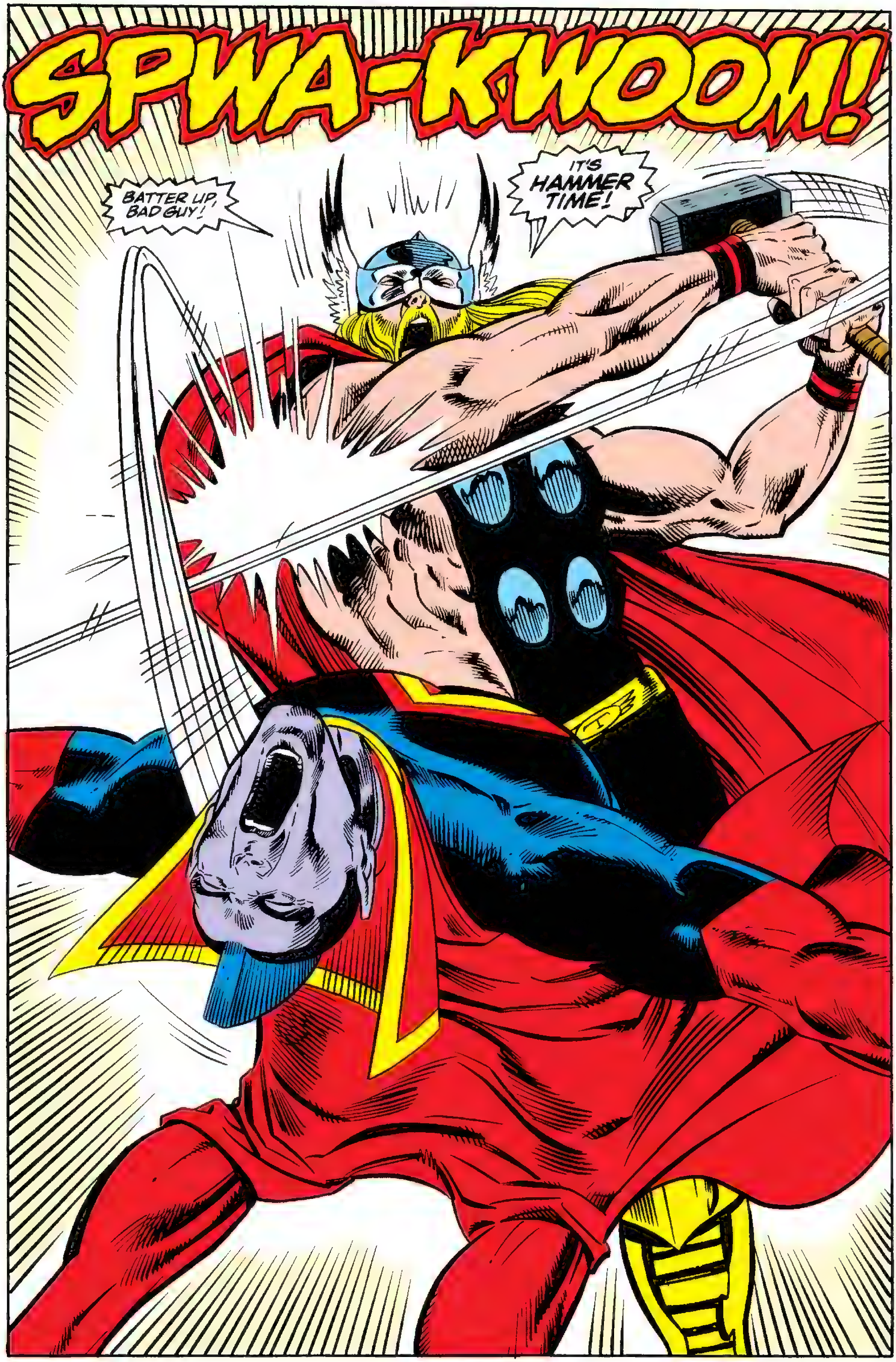

MAYBE SO, BUT I LOOK GOOD... WHICH IS A LOT MORE THAN YOU CAN SAY!
TELL ME THE TRUTH, HANDSOME! DOES YOUR MOTHER STYLE YOUR HAIR...OR IS IT THE RESULT OF SOME SHI'AR FRATERNITY HAZING RITUAL?!
I SHALL CRUSH THE FRIVOLITY FROM YOU!
GO FOR IT, MAN!
GO!
GO!
GO!
TERRIBLE, IRRESISTIBLE STRENGTH STRUGGLES AGAINST UNRELENTING, IMMOVABLE MUSCLE!
A POWER BORN OF THE STARS OPPOSES AN IMMORTAL FORCE!
WHO SHALL PROVE THE STRONGER?
ALAS, THE FRAGILE SOIL CANNOT WITHSTAND THE IMMEASURABLE STRAIN OF SUCH A TITANIC DUEL--
--AND A VICTORY IS LOST AMID A MOUNTAIN OF TUMBLING DEBRIS!

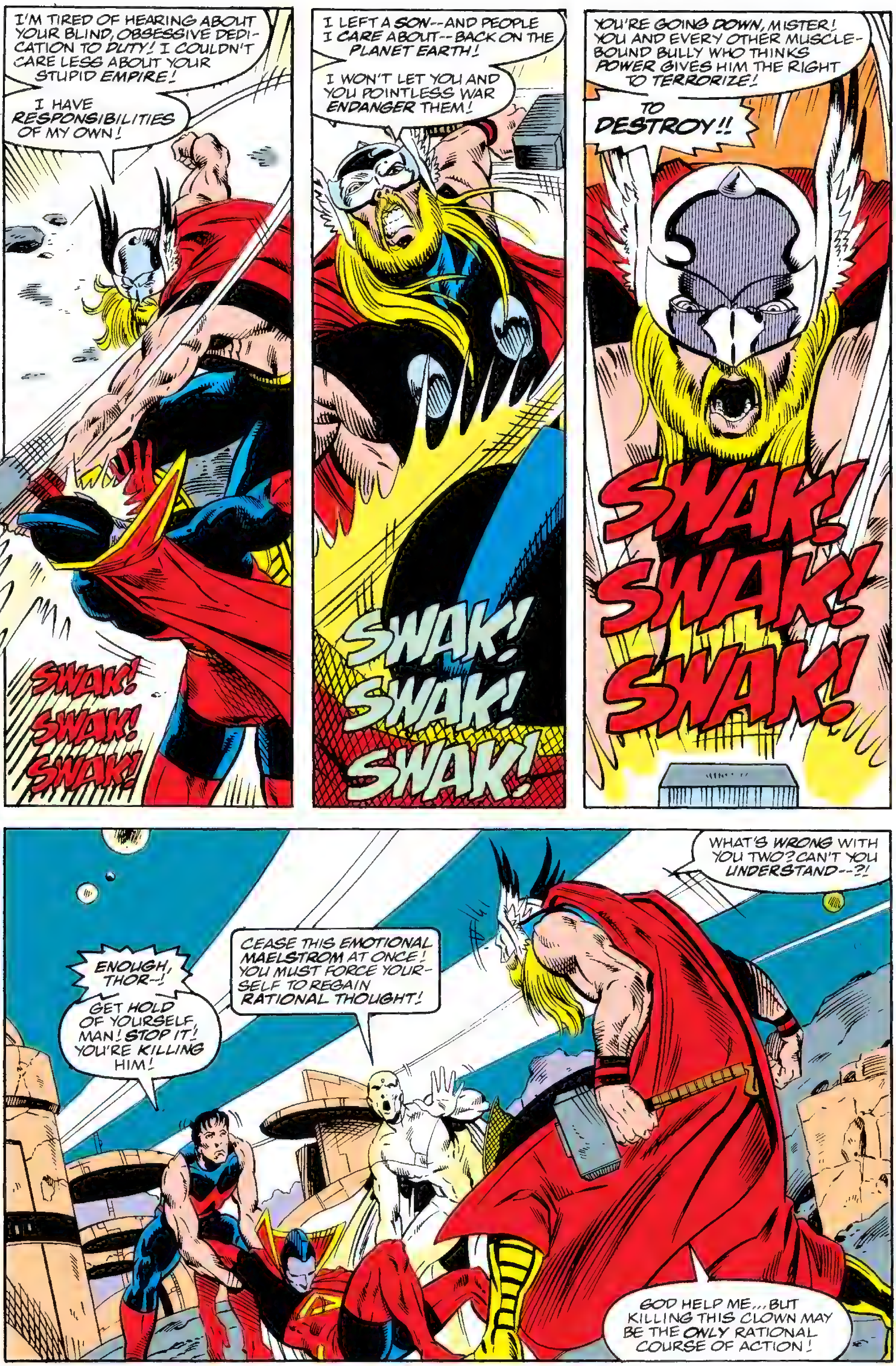

AND THEN...
ENOUGH! I MUST END THIS NONSENSE!
KRAK!
UGN I... SHOULDN'T HAVE RELAXED MY GRIP!
THIS KREE DUPE IS MUCH TOO POWERFUL, TOO DANGEROUS!
HIS VERY EXISTENCE IS A THREAT TO THE SHI'AR EMPIRE!
UNNN I HAVEN'T HAD A HEADACHE THIS BAD...SINCE MY I.R.S. AUDIT!
I WONDER HOW THE VISION WOULD REACT IF I FLEW BACK TO THE QUINJET...AND TOLD HIM I'D RECONSIDERED MY GRAND GESTURE?!
WHEW I MUST BE PUNCHY IF I THINK I COULD GET ANY REACTION OUT OF OL' STONEFACE!
HEY! WHAT HAPPENED TO GORGEOUS GEORGE?
DON'T TELL ME HE GOT NABBED BY THE FASHION POLICE?!
FOR THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF MY PEOPLE, I CANNOT SUFFER THIS INTERLOPER TO LIVE!
IN THE NAME OF THE EMPRESS LILANDRA... I SENTENCE HIM TO DEATH!

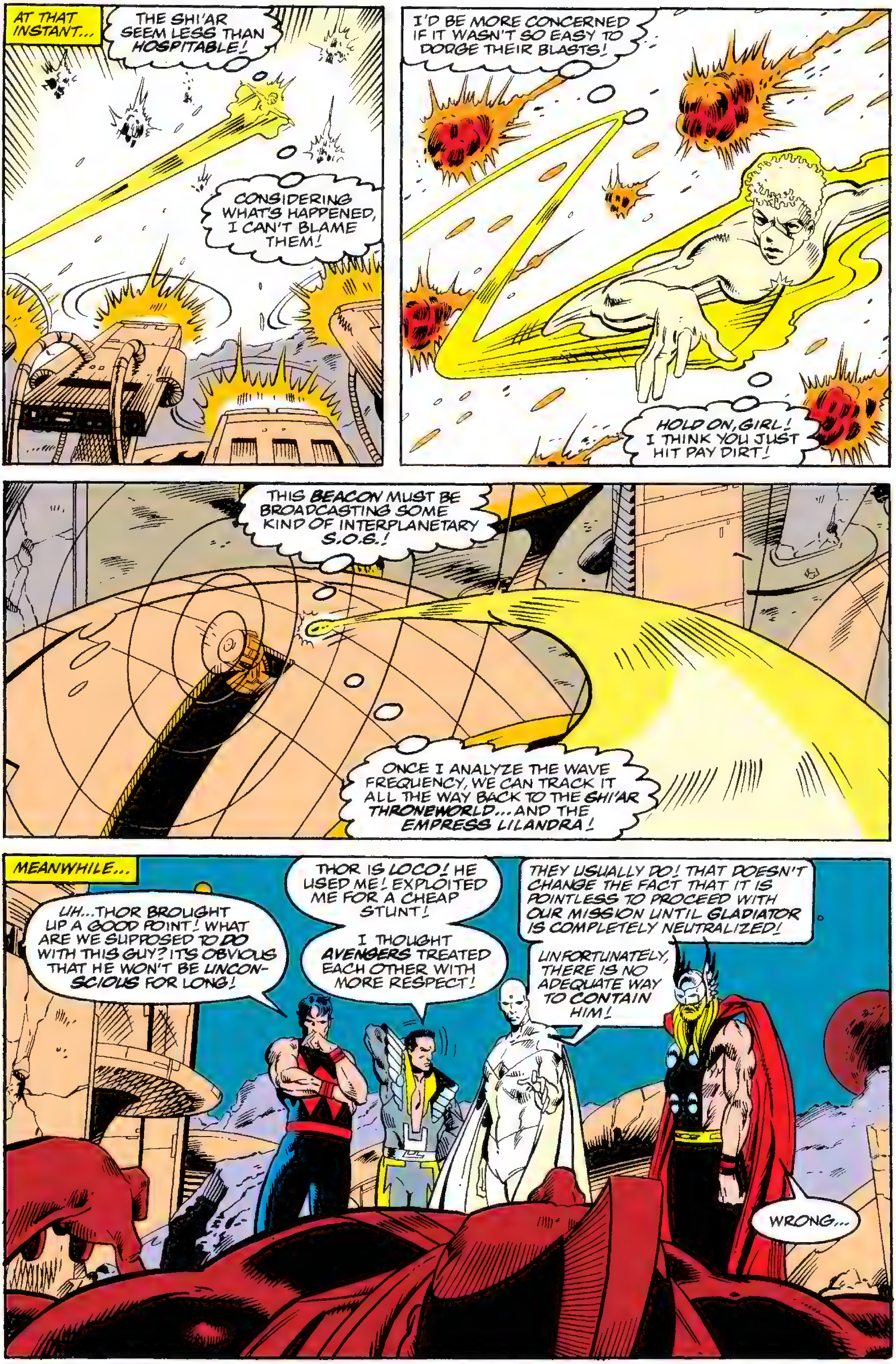

MEANWHILE...
THERE'S THE KREE SHIP--!
HURRY! WE MUST COMPLETE OUR SEARCH BEFORE THE SHI'AR ARRIVE!
THIS WON'T BE PRETTY, LIGHTNING! CRASH SITES NEVER ARE...
SOMETHING'S VERY WRONG HERE! THIS SHIP SHOULD BE FILLED WITH BROKEN BODIES... BUT IT SEEMS DESERTED!
WHERE'S THE CREW--?
AND, WHAT'S WITH ALL OF THESE PILES OF ASHES?!
LOOK! SOMETHING'S MOVING IN THOSE SHADOWS!
I...I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
THAT'S A SKRULL... ISN'T IT?!
YES, AND HE'S... MOVE OUT!
WE MADE IT!
HE WAS ACTIVATING A DESTRUCT SEQUENCE JUST LIKE I SUSPECTED!
I THOUGHT THE SKRULL AND KREE WERE ENEMIES!
WHY WAS HE IN THAT SHIP?!
THAT IS THE QUESTION!
YOU REPORT TO THE OTHERS! I'LL SCOUT THE SHI'AR SETTLEMENT FOR ANSWERS--!

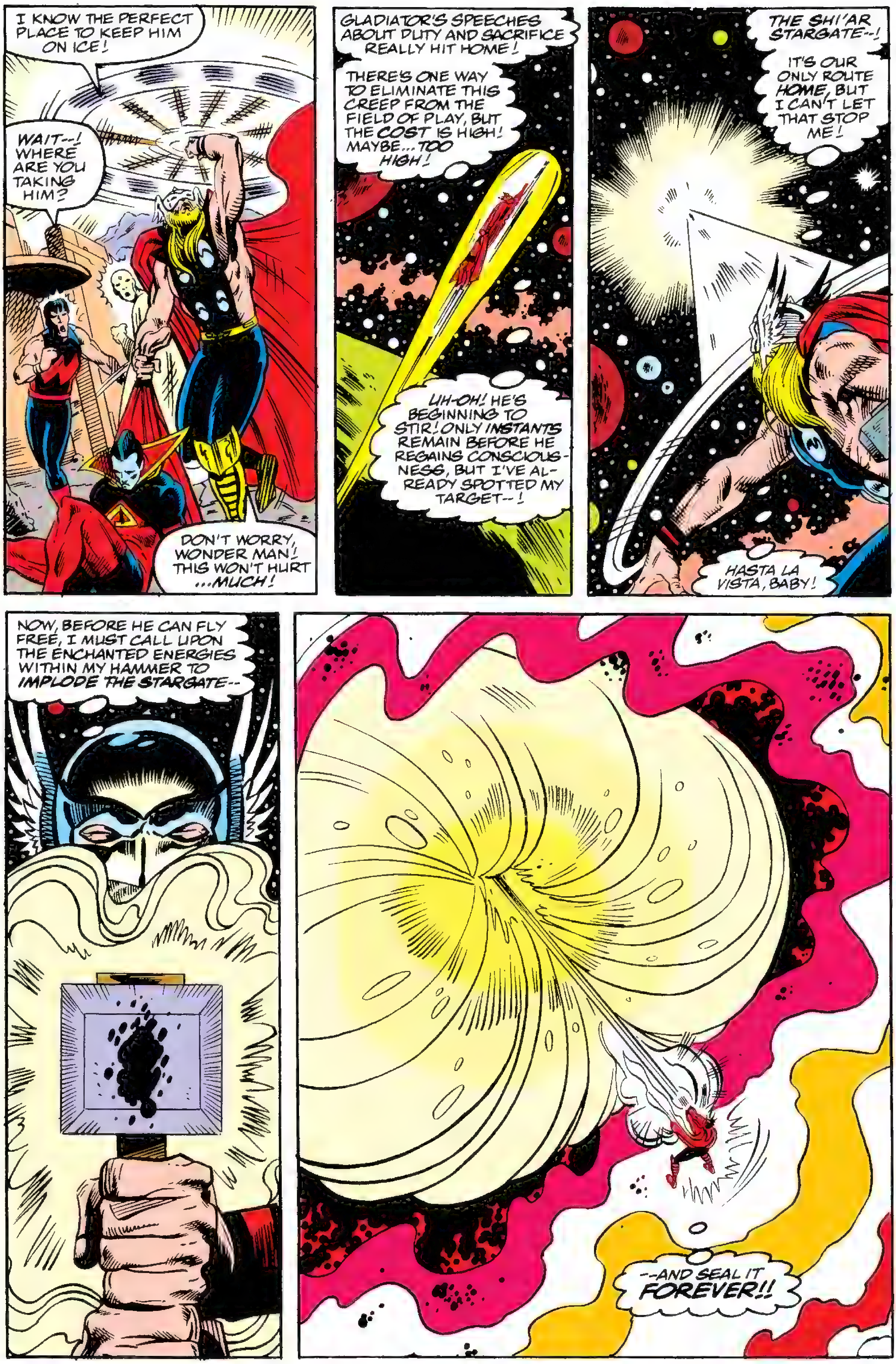

AND, JUST THEN...
I STRIKE FOR EMPRESS AND EMPIRE--
--TO THE DEATH!!
TWAKK!
I GUESS THAT WAR CRY IS MY CUE TO BURST INTO TEARS, FALL ON MY KNEES, AND BEG FOR MERCY!
HOW ABOUT I JUST WRAP AN ARM AROUND YOUR HEAD, AND FLATTEN YOUR FACE?
WHOOPS--!
IGNORANT SAVAGE! YOU STILL JOKE! YOU STILL RIDICULE ME--
--AND YOU STILL REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE OVERWHELMING SUPERIORITY OF MY STRENGTH! MY POWER!
I AM A TRUE WARRIOR-BORN IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD!
I WILL NEVER SHIRK MY RESPONSIBILITY TO MY PEOPLE! I WILL NEVER FAIL MY EMPRESS!
SPNATT!
AND I WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED BY A BUFFOON LIKE YOU!
TWAAM!

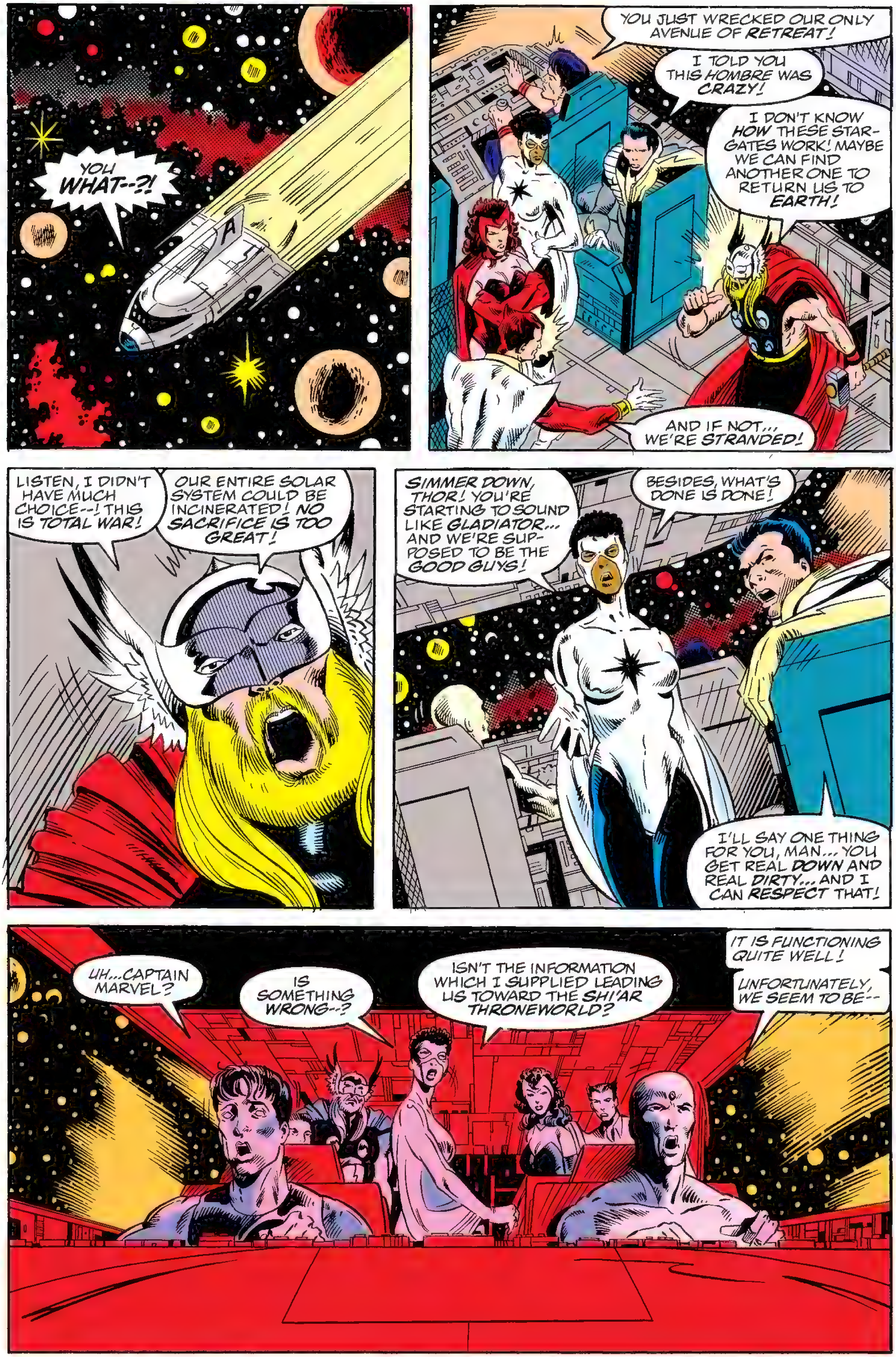

BUFFOON, MOI?
NOW YOU'VE REALLY DONE IT! YOU HURT MY FEELINGS!
NOT TO MENTION EVERY BONE IN MY BODY! I'D BETTER COME UP WITH SOMETHING FAST OR...
WAIT! UP IN THE SKY-- IT'S LIVING LIGHTNING!
I SOMETIMES FORGET THAT GOOD OL' MJOLNIR CAN SUMMON THE ELEMENTS OF THE STORM...AND THAT INCLUDES LIGHTNING!
TAP! TAP!
SEIZED BY A FORCE FAR BEYOND HIS COMPREHENSION, ENTHRALLED BY ASGARDIAN MAGIC...
...LIVING LIGHTNING IS SUDDENLY WRENCHED FROM THE SKY...
AND THEN...
KWA-BWAK!
IT WORKED! I FINALLY MANAGED TO STUN THE SUCKER!
BUT I KNOW HE WON'T BE OUT FOR LONG UNLESS--

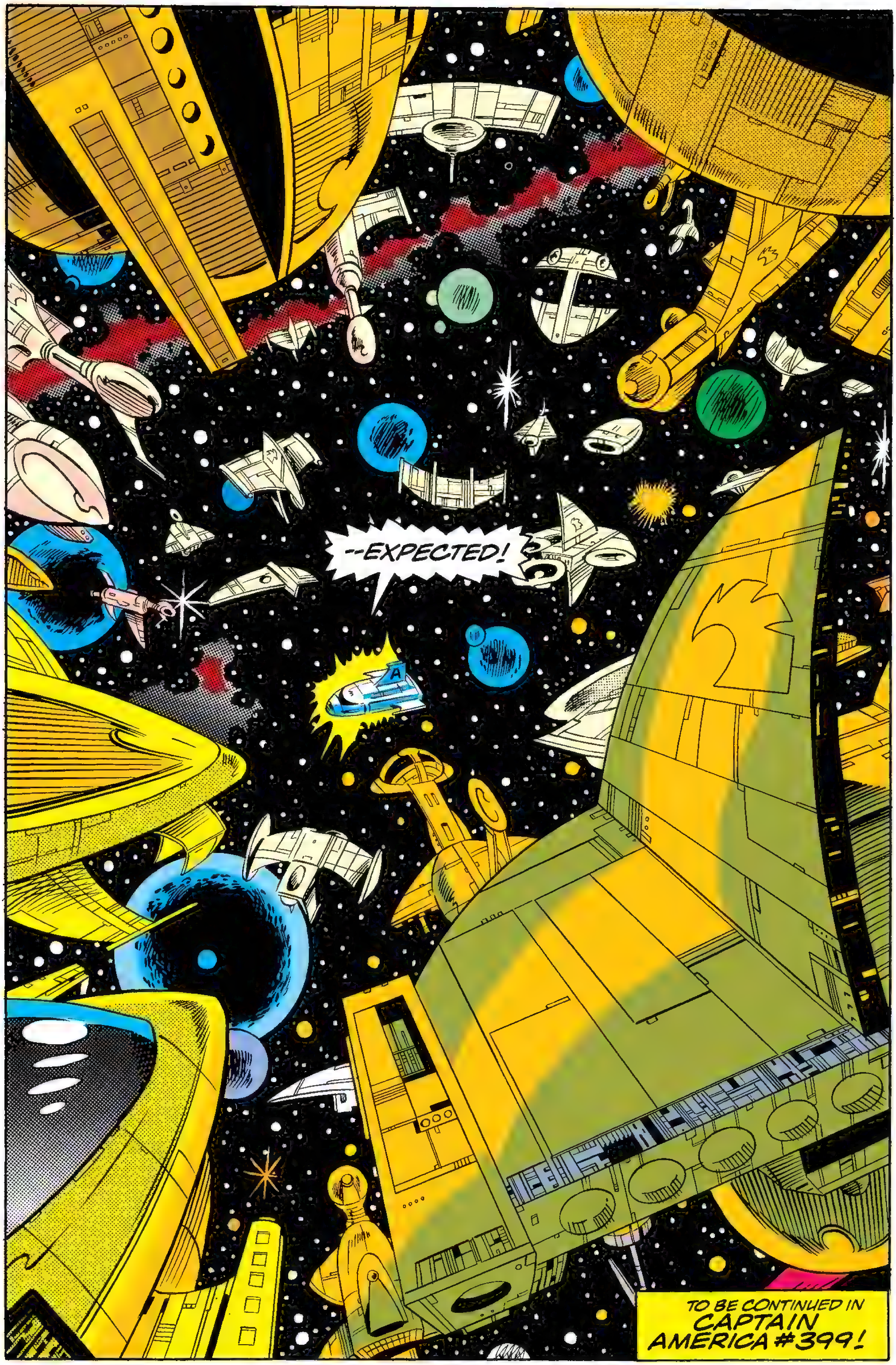

SPWA-KWOOM!
BATTER UP, BAD GUY!
IT'S HAMMER TIME!


I'M TIRED OF HEARING ABOUT YOUR BLIND, OBSESSIVE DEDICATION TO DUTY! I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT YOUR STUPID EMPIRE!
I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MY OWN!
SWAK! SWAK! SWAK!
I LEFT A SON--AND PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT--BACK ON THE PLANET EARTH!
I WON'T LET YOU AND YOU POINTLESS WAR ENDANGER THEM!
SWAK! SWAK! SWAK!
YOU'RE GOING DOWN, MISTER! YOU AND EVERY OTHER MUSCLE-BOUND BULLY WHO THINKS POWER GIVES HIM THE RIGHT TO TERRORIZE!
TO DESTROY!!
SWAK! SWAK! SWAK!
ENOUGH, THOR--!
GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, MAN! STOP IT! YOU'RE KILLING HIM!
CEASE THIS EMOTIONAL MAELSTROM AT ONCE! YOU MUST FORCE YOURSELF TO REGAIN RATIONAL THOUGHT!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU TWO? CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND--?!
GOD HELP ME... BUT KILLING THIS CLOWN MAY BE THE ONLY RATIONAL COURSE OF ACTION!


AT THAT INSTANT...
THE SHI'AR SEEM LESS THAN *HOSPITABLE!*
CONSIDERING WHAT'S HAPPENED, I CAN'T BLAME THEM!
I'D BE MORE CONCERNED IF IT WASN'T SO EASY TO DODGE THEIR BLASTS!
HOLD ON, GIRL! I THINK YOU JUST HIT PAY DIRT!
THIS *BEACON* MUST BE BROADCASTING SOME KIND OF INTERPLANETARY *S.O.S.!*
ONCE I ANALYZE THE WAVE FREQUENCY, WE CAN TRACK IT ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE *SHI'AR THRONEWORLD*... AND THE *EMPRESS LILANDRA!*
MEANWHILE...
UH...THOR BROUGHT UP A *GOOD POINT!* WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO *DO* WITH THIS GUY? IT'S OBVIOUS THAT HE WON'T BE *UNCONSCIOUS* FOR LONG!
THOR IS *LOCO!* HE USED ME! EXPLOITED ME FOR A CHEAP STUNT!
I THOUGHT *AVENGERS* TREATED EACH OTHER WITH MORE RESPECT!
THEY USUALLY DO! THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT IT IS POINTLESS TO PROCEED WITH OUR MISSION UNTIL *GLADIATOR* IS COMPLETELY NEUTRALIZED!
UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS NO ADEQUATE WAY TO CONTAIN HIM!
WRONG...


I KNOW THE PERFECT PLACE TO KEEP HIM ON ICE!
WAIT--! WHERE ARE YOU TAKING HIM?
DON'T WORRY, WONDER MAN! THIS WON'T HURT ...MUCH!
GLADIATOR'S SPEECHES ABOUT DUTY AND SACRIFICE REALLY HIT HOME!
THERE'S ONE WAY TO ELIMINATE THIS CREEP FROM THE FIELD OF PLAY, BUT THE COST IS HIGH! MAYBE... TOO HIGH!
UH-OH! HE'S BEGINNING TO STIR! ONLY INSTANTS REMAIN BEFORE HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT I'VE ALREADY SPOTTED MY TARGET--!
THE SHI'AR STARGATE--!
IT'S OUR ONLY ROUTE HOME, BUT I CAN'T LET THAT STOP ME!
HASTA LA VISTA, BABY!
NOW, BEFORE HE CAN FLY FREE, I MUST CALL UPON THE ENCHANTED ENERGIES WITHIN MY HAMMER TO IMPLODE THE STARGATE--
--AND SEAL IT FOREVER!!


YOU WHAT--?!
YOU JUST WRECKED OUR ONLY AVENUE OF RETREAT!
I TOLD YOU THIS HOMBRE WAS CRAZY!
I DON'T KNOW HOW THESE STAR-GATES WORK! MAYBE WE CAN FIND ANOTHER ONE TO RETURN US TO EARTH!
AND IF NOT... WE'RE STRANDED!
LISTEN, I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE--! THIS IS TOTAL WAR!
OUR ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM COULD BE INCINERATED! NO SACRIFICE IS TOO GREAT!
SIMMER DOWN, THOR! YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND LIKE GLADIATOR... AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE GOOD GUYS!
BESIDES, WHAT'S DONE IS DONE!
I'LL SAY ONE THING FOR YOU, MAN... YOU GET REAL DOWN AND REAL DIRTY... AND I CAN RESPECT THAT!
UH...CAPTAIN MARVEL?
IS SOMETHING WRONG--?
ISN'T THE INFORMATION WHICH I SUPPLIED LEADING US TOWARD THE SHI'AR THRONEWORLD?
IT IS FUNCTIONING QUITE WELL!
UNFORTUNATELY, WE SEEM TO BE--


--EXPECTED!
A
TO BE CONTINUED IN CAPTAIN AMERICA #399!

MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 8
TM
CAPTAIN AMERICA
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LEVINS+HUDSON

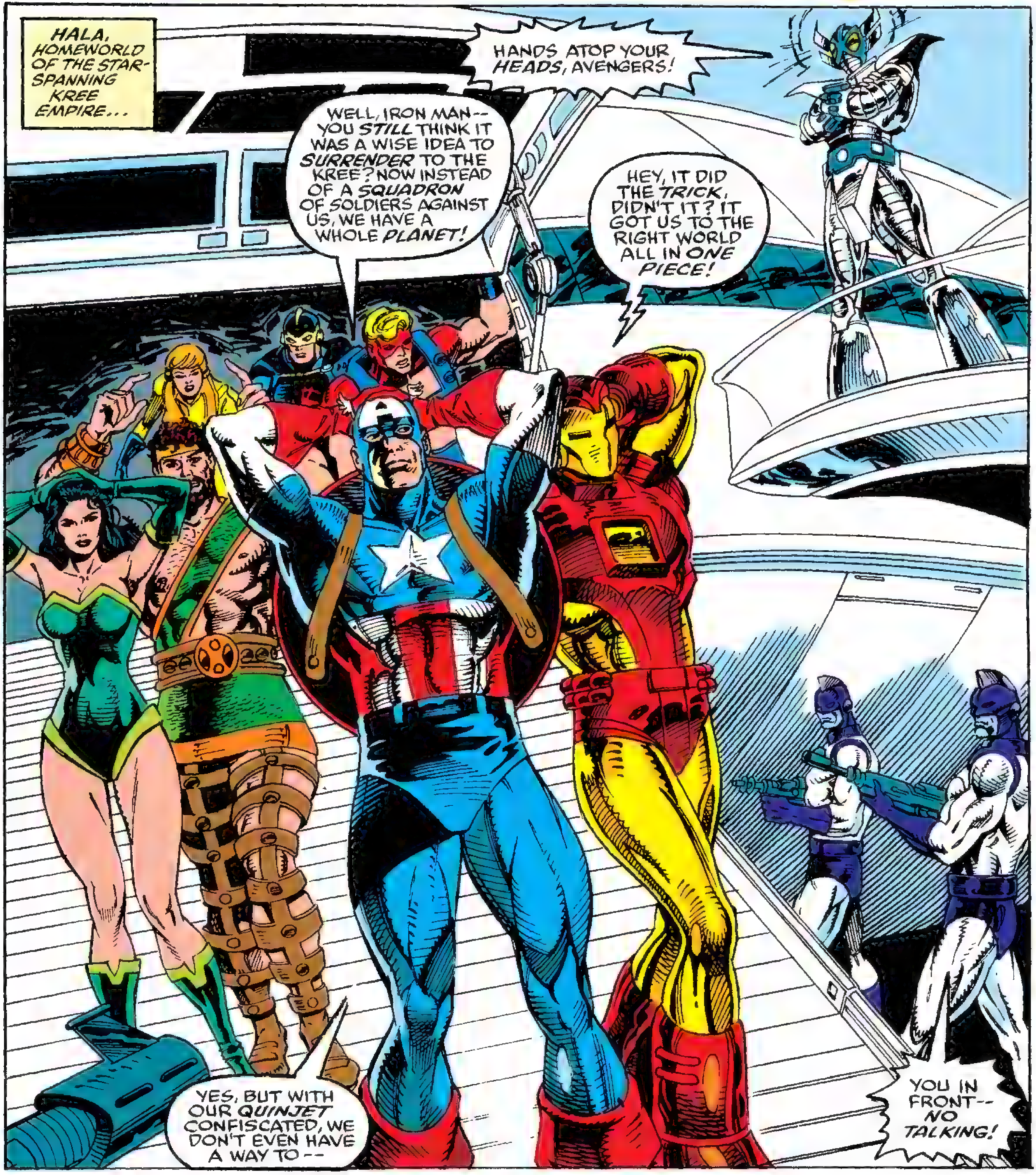
TWO GALACTIC EMPIRES — THE MILITARISTIC KREE AND THE MATRIARCHAL SHI'AR — ARE AT WAR, A WAR THAT THREATENS ALL LIFE ON EARTH. THE MIGHTY AVENGERS HAVE SPLIT INTO TWO ENVOYS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE HEADS OF EACH EMPIRE. IN THE GROUP SENT TO THE KREE EMPIRE — IRON MAN, SERSI, HERCULES, THE BLACK KNIGHT, CRYSTAL, GOLIATH, AND. . .CAPTAIN AMERICA!

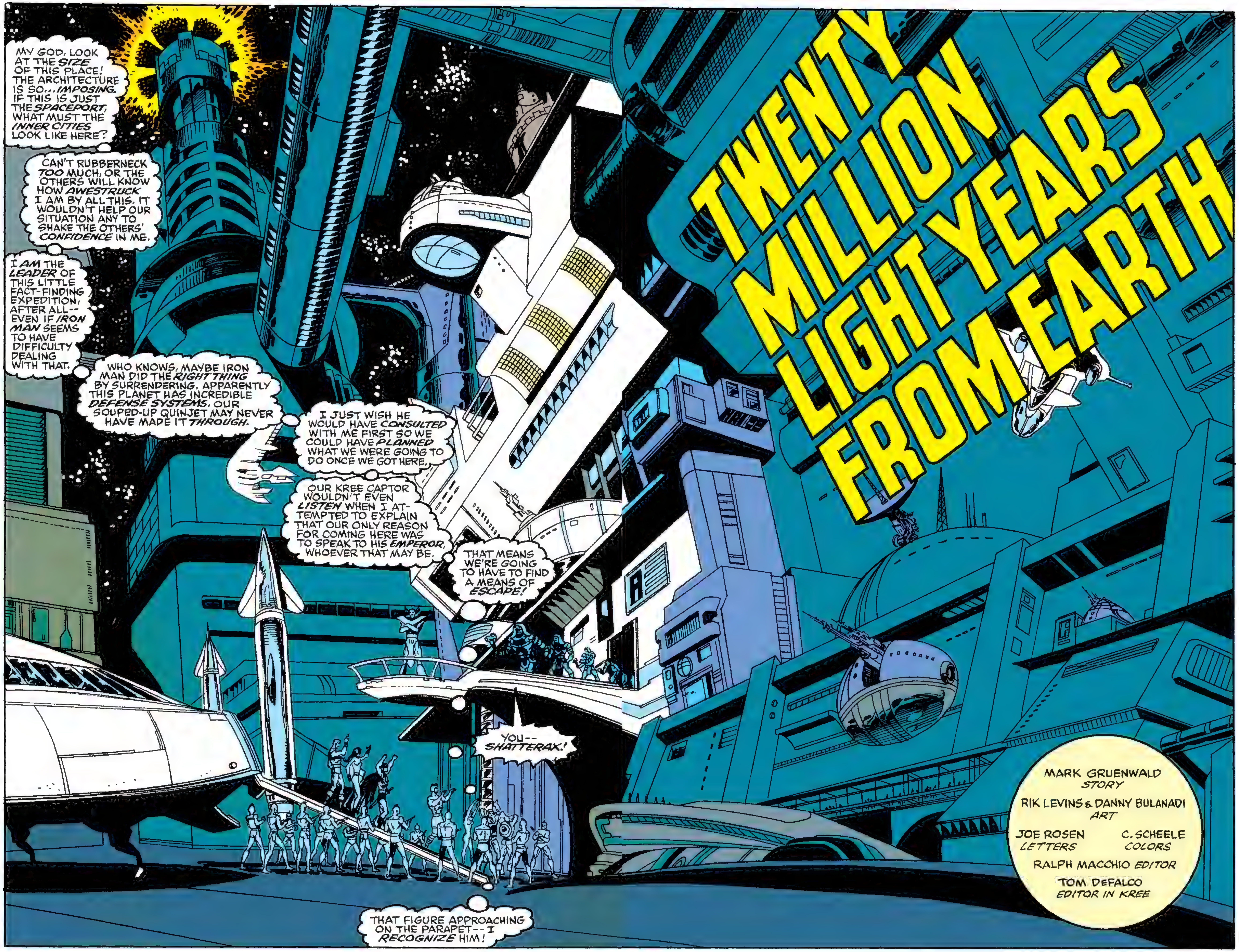
Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

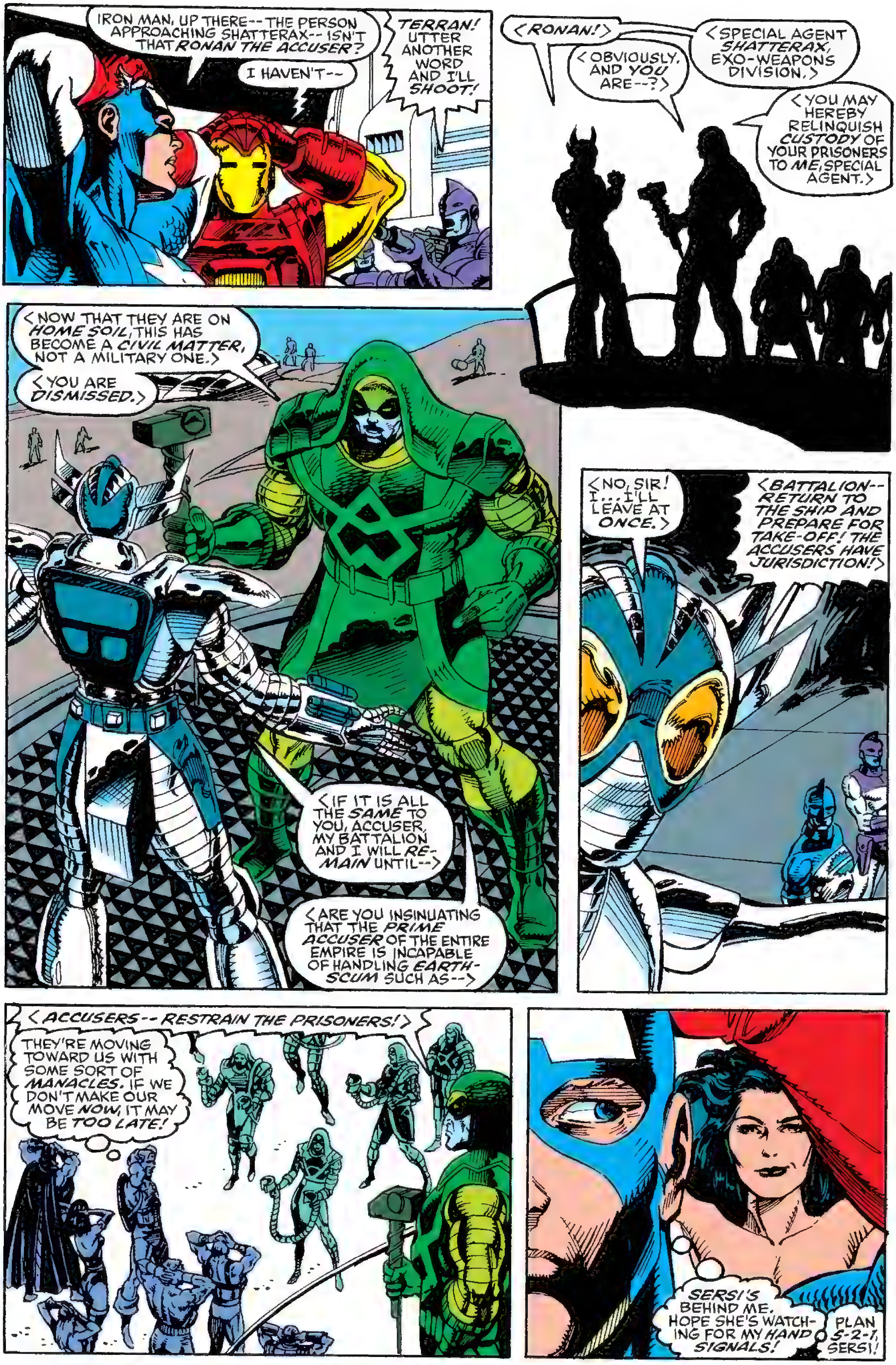
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

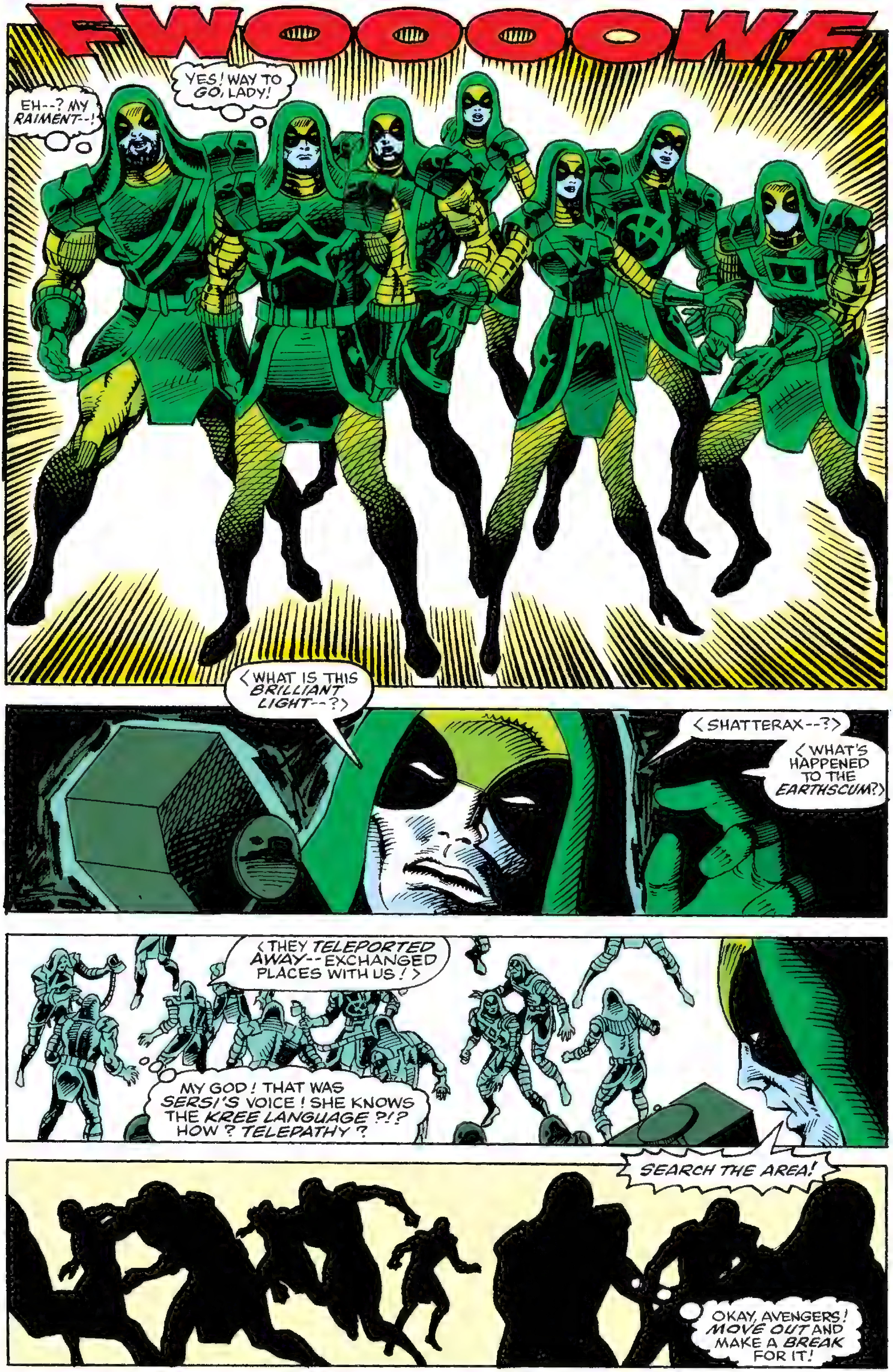
PART 8

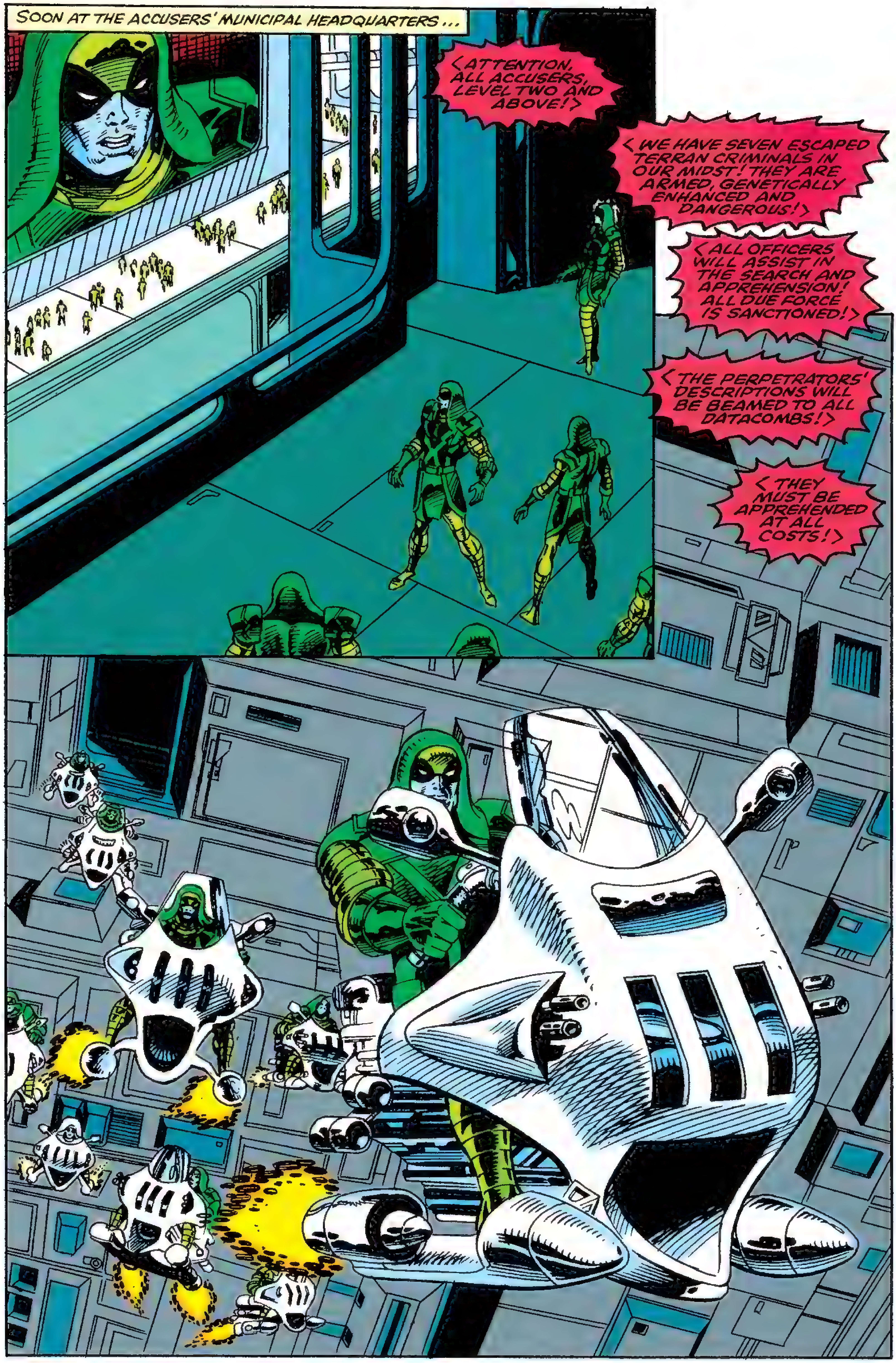
CAPTAIN AMERICA

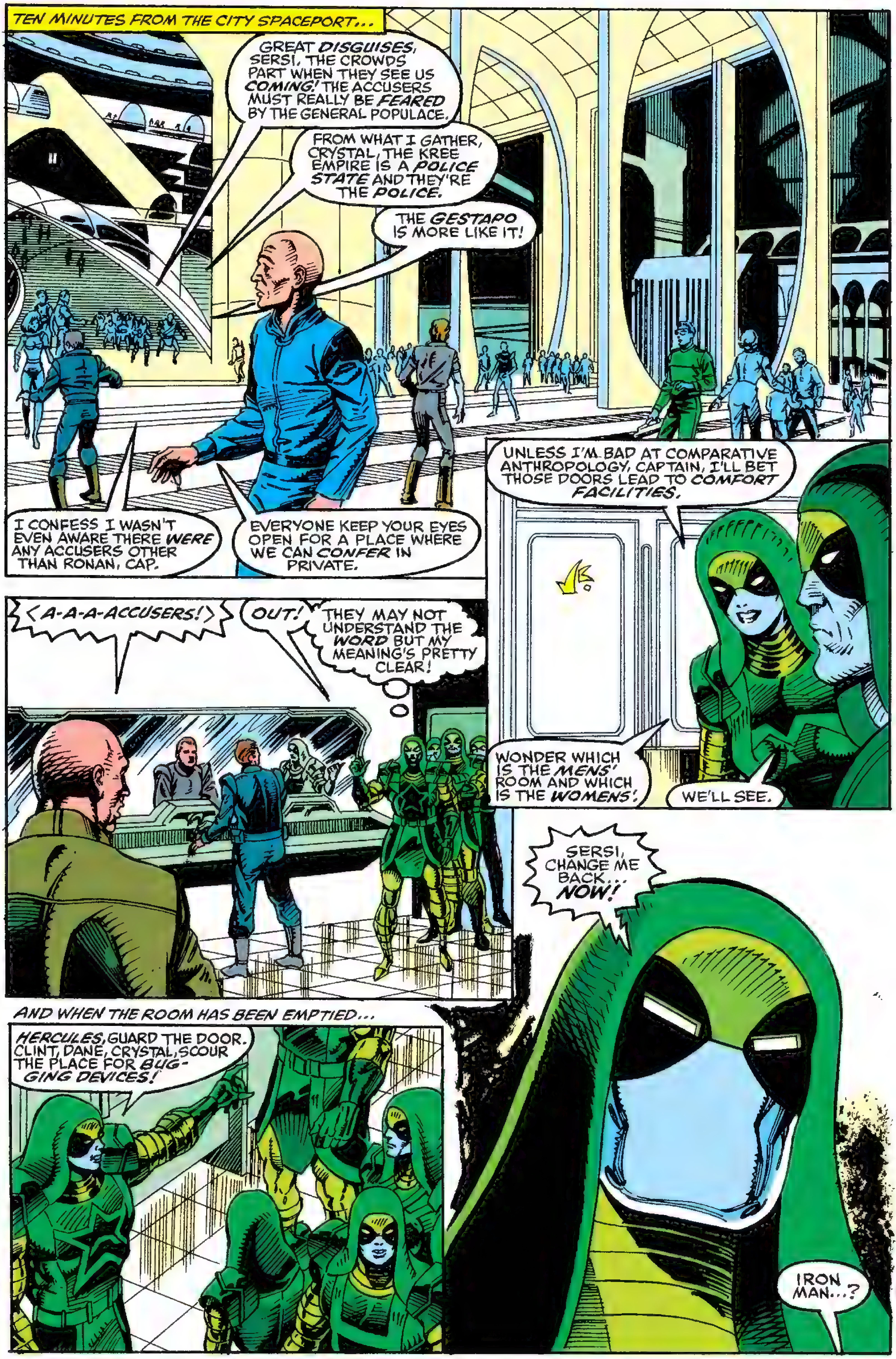

HALA, HOMEWORLD OF THE STAR-SPANNING KREE EMPIRE...
HANDS ATOP YOUR HEADS, AVENGERS!
WELL, IRON MAN--YOU STILL THINK IT WAS A WISE IDEA TO SURRENDER TO THE KREE? NOW INSTEAD OF A SQUADRON OF SOLDIERS AGAINST US, WE HAVE A WHOLE PLANET!
HEY, IT DID THE TRICK, DIDN'T IT? IT GOT US TO THE RIGHT WORLD ALL IN ONE PIECE!
YES, BUT WITH OUR QUINJET CONFISCATED, WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A WAY TO--
YOU IN FRONT--NO TALKING!

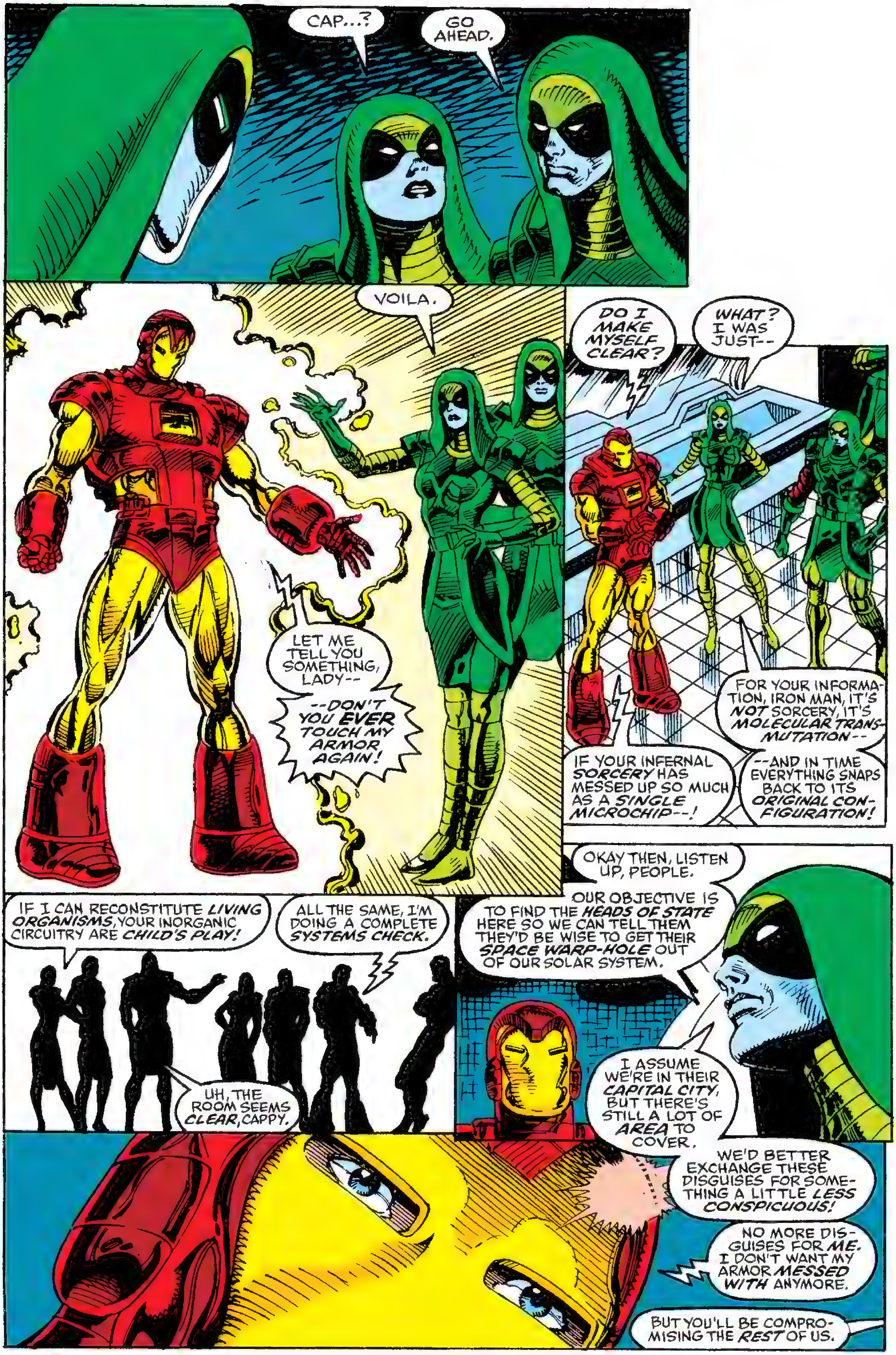

MY GOD, LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THIS PLACE! THE ARCHITECTURE IS SO... IMPOSING. IF THIS IS JUST THE SPACEPORT, WHAT MUST THE INNER CITIES LOOK LIKE HERE?
CAN'T RUBBERNECK TOO MUCH, OR THE OTHERS WILL KNOW HOW AWESTRUCK I AM BY ALL THIS. IT WOULDN'T HELP OUR SITUATION ANY TO SHAKE THE OTHERS' CONFIDENCE IN ME.
I AM THE LEADER OF THIS LITTLE FACT-FINDING EXPEDITION, AFTER ALL-- EVEN IF IRON MAN SEEMS TO HAVE DIFFICULTY DEALING WITH THAT.
WHO KNOWS, MAYBE IRON MAN DID THE RIGHT THING BY SURRENDERING. APPARENTLY THIS PLANET HAS INCREDIBLE DEFENSE SYSTEMS. OUR SOUPED-UP QUINJET MAY NEVER HAVE MADE IT THROUGH.
I JUST WISH HE WOULD HAVE CONSULTED WITH ME FIRST SO WE COULD HAVE PLANNED WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO ONCE WE GOT HERE.
OUR KREE CAPTOR WOULDN'T EVEN LISTEN WHEN I ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN THAT OUR ONLY REASON FOR COMING HERE WAS TO SPEAK TO HIS EMPEROR, WHOEVER THAT MAY BE.
THAT MEANS WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIND A MEANS OF ESCAPE!
YOU-- SHATTERAX!
THAT FIGURE APPROACHING ON THE PARAPET-- I RECOGNIZE HIM!
TWENTY MILLION LIGHT YEARS FROM EARTH
MARK GRUENWALD STORY
RIK LEVINS & DANNY BULANADI ART
JOE ROSEN LETTERS
C. SCHEELE COLORS
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN KREE

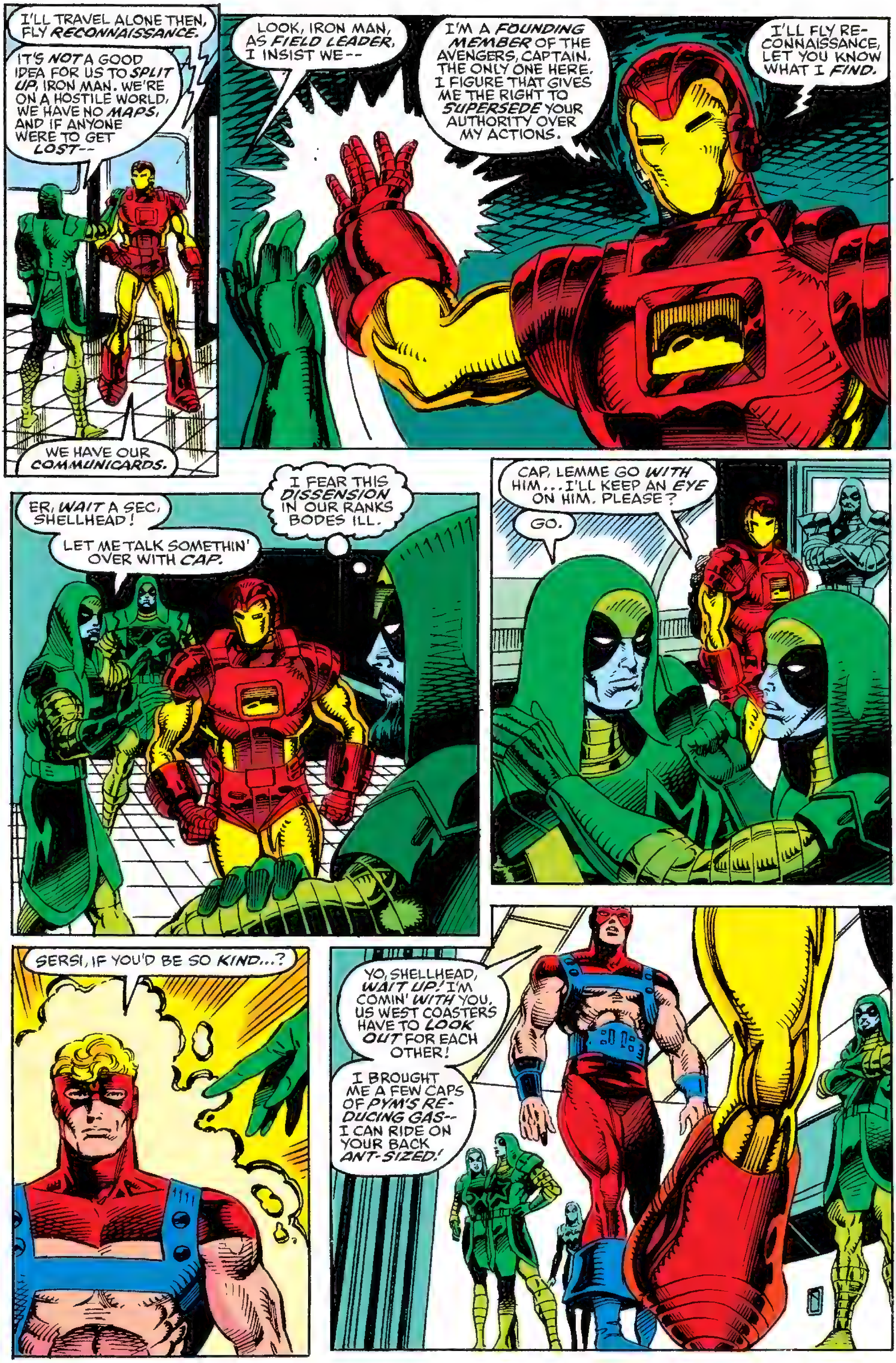

IRON MAN, UP THERE-- THE PERSON APPROACHING SHATTERAX-- ISN'T THAT *RONAN THE ACCUSER?*
I HAVEN'T--
TERRAN! UTTER ANOTHER WORD AND I'LL *SHOOT!*
<*RONAN!*>
<OBVIOUSLY. AND *YOU* ARE--?>
<SPECIAL AGENT *SHATTERAX,* EXO-WEAPONS DIVISION.>
<YOU MAY HEREBY RELINQUISH *CUSTODY* OF YOUR PRISONERS TO *ME,* SPECIAL AGENT.>
<NOW THAT THEY ARE ON *HOME SOIL,* THIS HAS BECOME A *CIVIL MATTER,* NOT A MILITARY ONE.>
<YOU ARE *DISMISSED.*>
<IF IT IS ALL THE *SAME* TO YOU, ACCUSER, MY BATTALION AND I WILL *REMAIN* UNTIL-->
<ARE YOU INSINUATING THAT THE *PRIME ACCUSER* OF THE ENTIRE EMPIRE IS INCAPABLE OF HANDLING *EARTH-SCUM* SUCH AS-->
<NO, SIR! I... I'LL LEAVE AT *ONCE.*>
<*BATTALION-- RETURN TO THE SHIP AND PREPARE FOR TAKE-OFF! THE ACCUSERS HAVE JURISDICTION!*>
<*ACCUSERS-- RESTRAIN THE PRISONERS!*>
THEY'RE MOVING TOWARD US WITH SOME SORT OF *MANACLES.* IF WE DON'T MAKE OUR MOVE *NOW,* IT MAY BE *TOO LATE!*
SERSI'S BEHIND ME. HOPE SHE'S WATCHING FOR MY *HAND SIGNALS!*
PLAN *S-2-7,* SERSI!

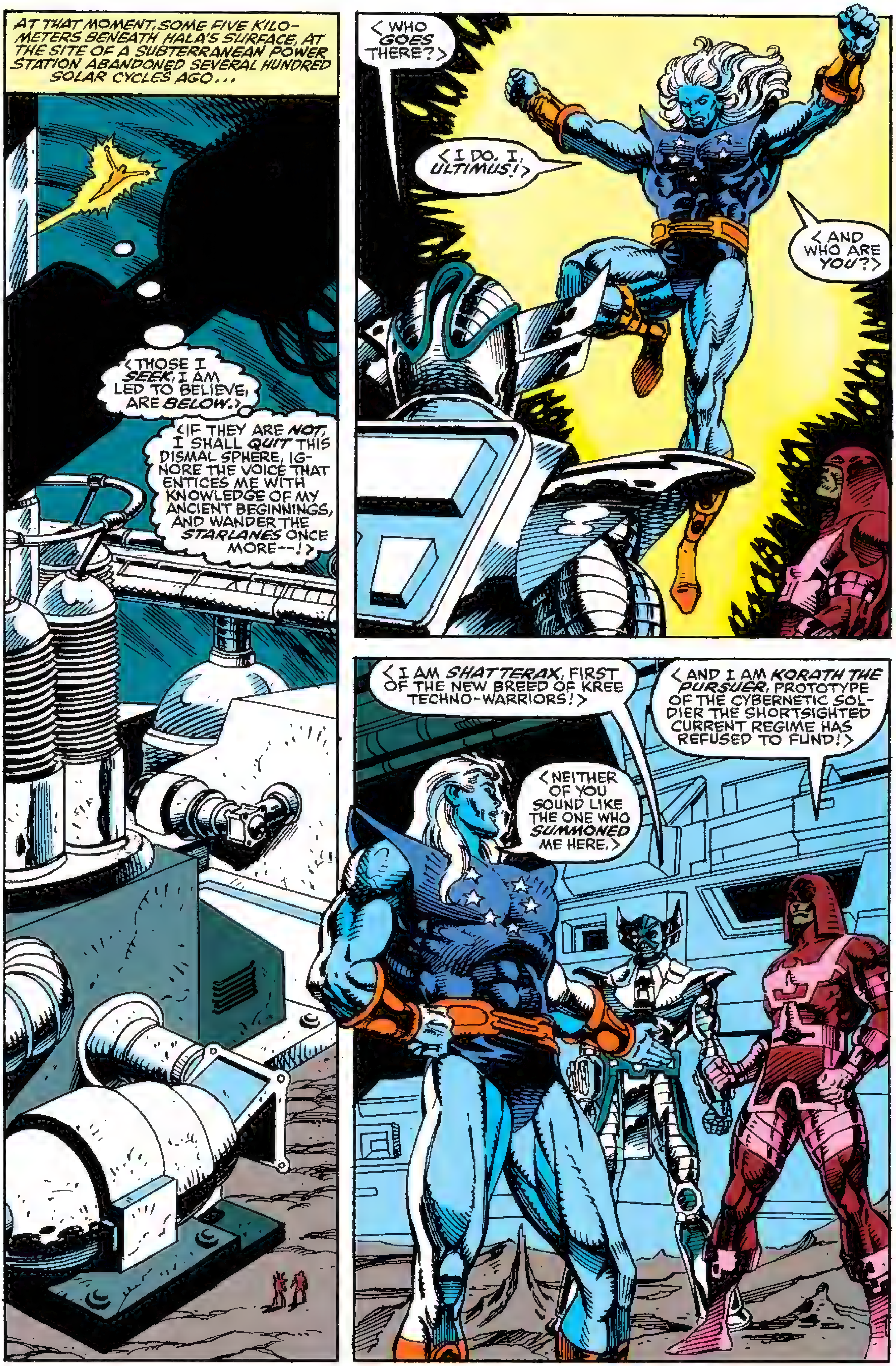

FWOOOOWF
EH--? MY RAIMENT--!
YES! WAY TO GO, LADY!
< WHAT IS THIS BRILLIANT LIGHT--? >
< SHATTERAX--? >
< WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE EARTHSCUM? >
< THEY TELEPORTED AWAY-- EXCHANGED PLACES WITH US! >
MY GOD! THAT WAS SERSI'S VOICE! SHE KNOWS THE KREE LANGUAGE ?!? HOW? TELEPATHY?
SEARCH THE AREA!
OKAY, AVENGERS! MOVE OUT AND MAKE A BREAK FOR IT!

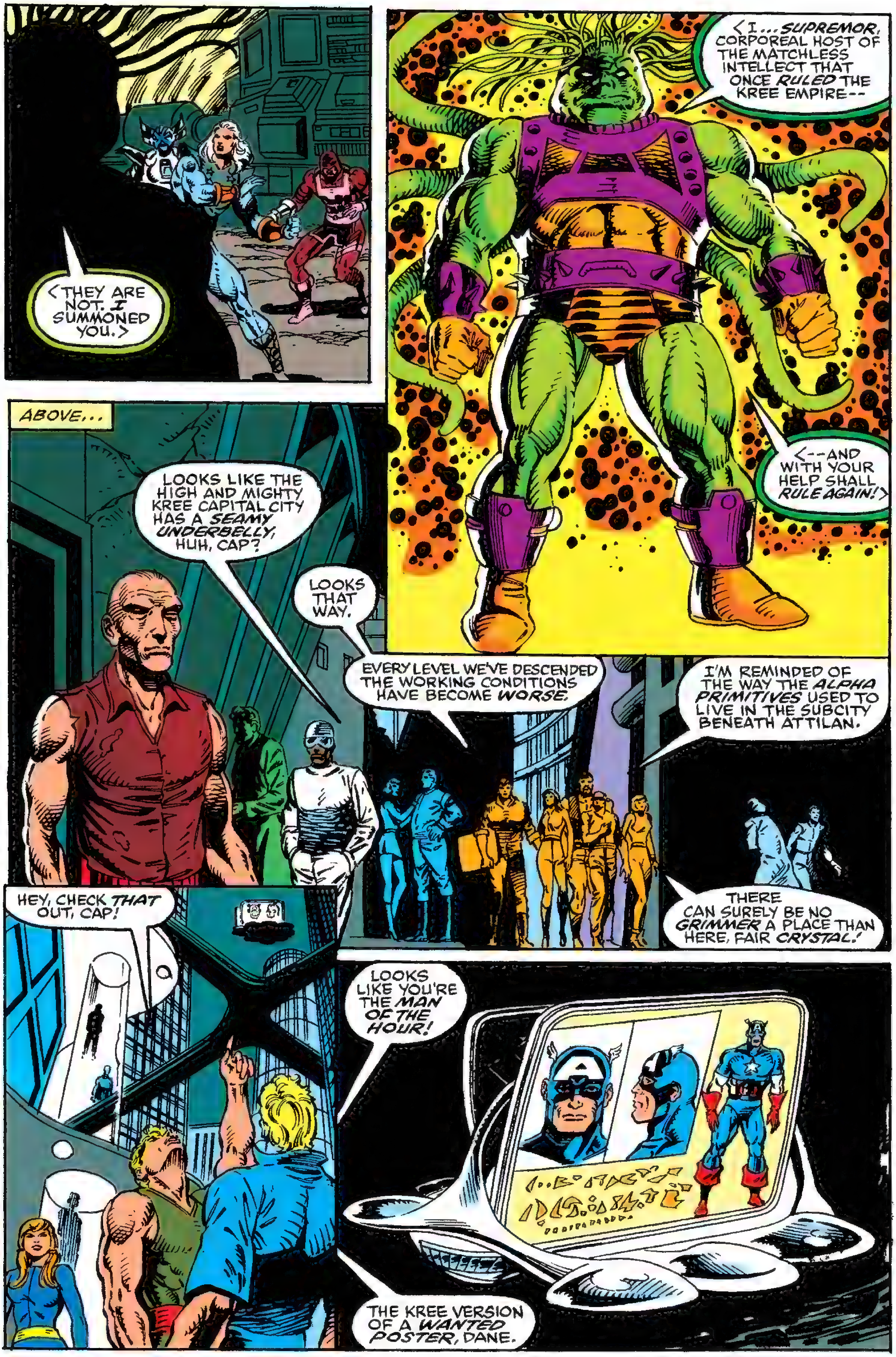

SOON AT THE ACCUSERS' MUNICIPAL HEADQUARTERS...
<ATTENTION, ALL ACCUSERS, LEVEL TWO AND ABOVE!>
<WE HAVE SEVEN ESCAPED TERRAN CRIMINALS IN OUR MIDST! THEY ARE ARMED, GENETICALLY ENHANCED AND DANGEROUS!>
<ALL OFFICERS WILL ASSIST IN THE SEARCH AND APPREHENSION! ALL DUE FORCE IS SANCTIONED!>
<THE PERPETRATORS' DESCRIPTIONS WILL BE BEAMED TO ALL DATACOMBS!>
<THEY MUST BE APPREHENDED AT ALL COSTS!>

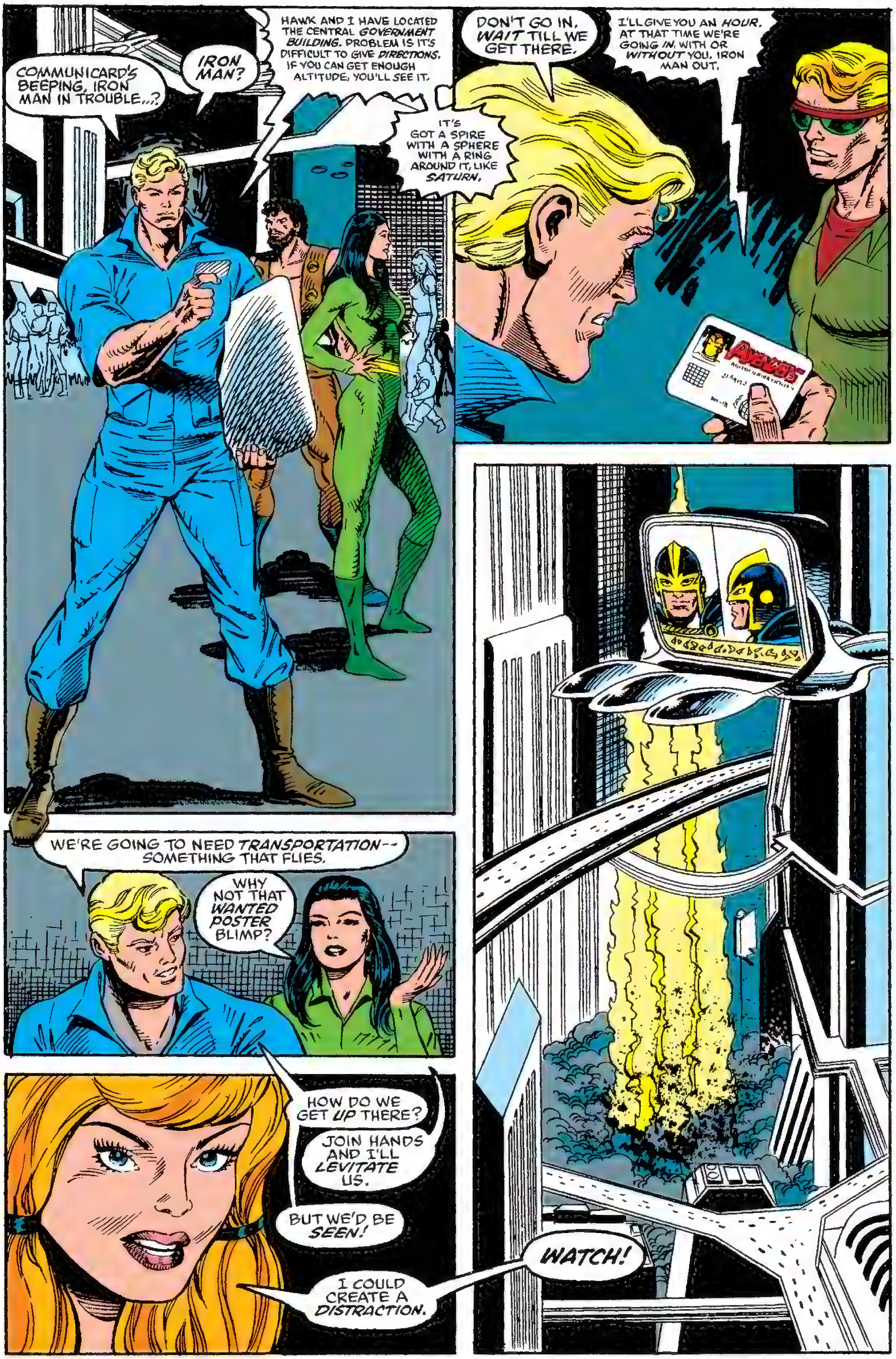

TEN MINUTES FROM THE CITY SPACEPORT...
GREAT DISGUISES, SERSI. THE CROWDS PART WHEN THEY SEE US COMING! THE ACCUSERS MUST REALLY BE FEARED BY THE GENERAL POPULACE.
FROM WHAT I GATHER, CRYSTAL, THE KREE EMPIRE IS A POLICE STATE AND THEY'RE THE POLICE.
THE GESTAPO IS MORE LIKE IT!
I CONFESS I WASN'T EVEN AWARE THERE WERE ANY ACCUSERS OTHER THAN RONAN, CAP.
EVERYONE KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR A PLACE WHERE WE CAN CONFER IN PRIVATE.
UNLESS I'M BAD AT COMPARATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY, CAPTAIN, I'LL BET THOSE DOORS LEAD TO COMFORT FACILITIES.
WONDER WHICH IS THE MENS' ROOM AND WHICH IS THE WOMENS'.
WE'LL SEE.
<A-A-A-ACCUSERS!>
OUT!
THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE WORD BUT MY MEANING'S PRETTY CLEAR!
AND WHEN THE ROOM HAS BEEN EMPTIED...
HERCULES, GUARD THE DOOR. CLINT, DANE, CRYSTAL, SCOUR THE PLACE FOR BUGGING DEVICES!
SERSI, CHANGE ME BACK... NOW!
IRON MAN...?

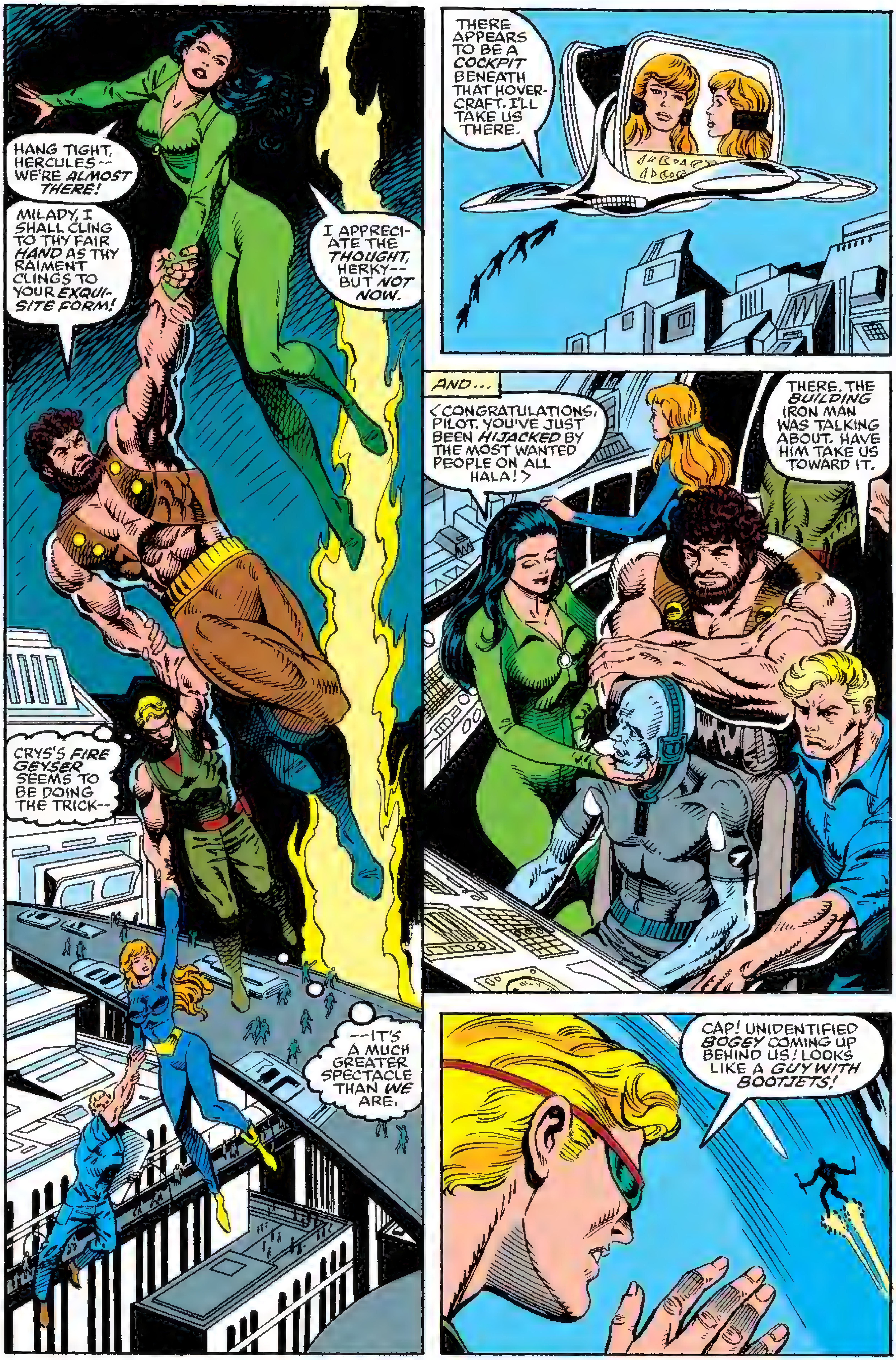

CAP...?
GO AHEAD.
VOILA.
LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, LADY--
--DON'T YOU EVER TOUCH MY ARMOR AGAIN!
DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?
WHAT? I WAS JUST--
IF YOUR INFERNAL SORCERY HAS MESSED UP SO MUCH AS A SINGLE MICROCHIP--!
FOR YOUR INFORMATION, IRON MAN, IT'S NOT SORCERY, IT'S MOLECULAR TRANSMUTATION--
--AND IN TIME EVERYTHING SNAPS BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION!
IF I CAN RECONSTITUTE LIVING ORGANISMS, YOUR INORGANIC CIRCUITRY ARE CHILD'S PLAY!
ALL THE SAME, I'M DOING A COMPLETE SYSTEMS CHECK.
UH, THE ROOM SEEMS CLEAR, CAPPY.
OKAY THEN, LISTEN UP, PEOPLE.
OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO FIND THE HEADS OF STATE HERE SO WE CAN TELL THEM THEY'D BE WISE TO GET THEIR SPACE WARP-HOLE OUT OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM.
I ASSUME WE'RE IN THEIR CAPITAL CITY, BUT THERE'S STILL A LOT OF AREA TO COVER.
WE'D BETTER EXCHANGE THESE DISGUISES FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS CONSPICUOUS.
NO MORE DISGUISES FOR ME. I DON'T WANT MY ARMOR MESSED WITH ANYMORE.
BUT YOU'LL BE COMPROMISING THE REST OF US.

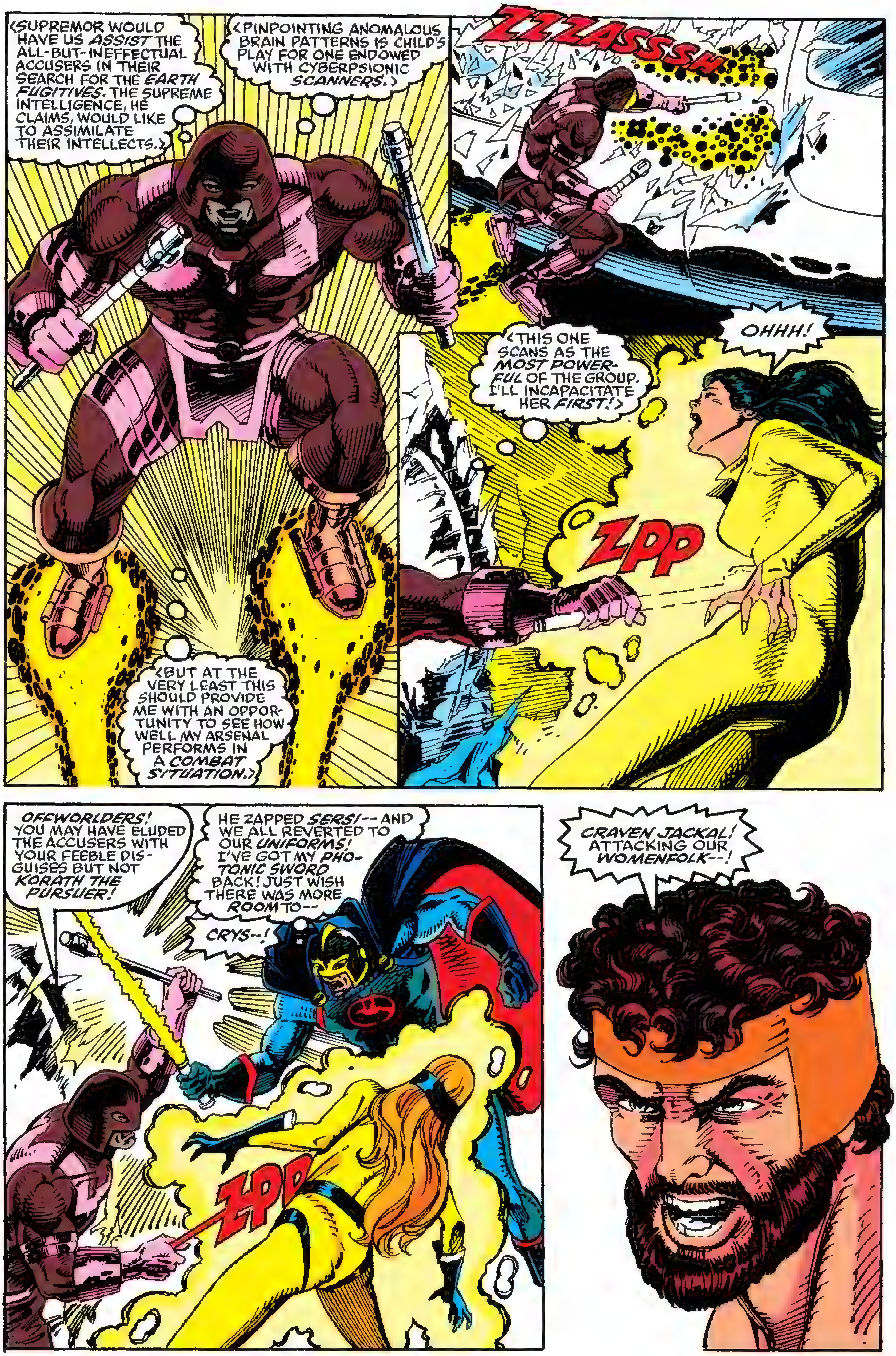

I'LL TRAVEL ALONE THEN, FLY *RECONNAISSANCE.*
IT'S *NOT* A GOOD IDEA FOR US TO *SPLIT UP,* IRON MAN. WE'RE ON A HOSTILE WORLD, WE HAVE NO *MAPS,* AND IF ANYONE WERE TO GET *LOST*--
WE HAVE OUR *COMMUNICARDS.*
LOOK, IRON MAN, AS *FIELD LEADER,* I INSIST WE--
I'M A *FOUNDING MEMBER* OF THE AVENGERS, CAPTAIN. THE ONLY ONE HERE. I FIGURE THAT GIVES ME THE RIGHT TO *SUPERSEDE* YOUR AUTHORITY OVER MY ACTIONS.
I'LL FLY RECONNAISSANCE, LET YOU KNOW WHAT I *FIND.*
ER, *WAIT* A SEC, SHELLHEAD!
LET ME TALK SOMETHIN' OVER WITH *CAP.*
I FEAR THIS *DISSENSION* IN OUR RANKS BODES ILL.
CAP, LEMME GO *WITH* HIM... I'LL KEEP AN *EYE* ON HIM. PLEASE?
GO.
SERSI, IF YOU'D BE SO *KIND...?*
YO, SHELLHEAD, *WAIT UP!* I'M COMIN' *WITH* YOU. US WEST COASTERS HAVE TO *LOOK OUT* FOR EACH OTHER!
I BROUGHT ME A FEW CAPS OF *PYM'S REDUCING GAS*-- I CAN RIDE ON YOUR BACK *ANT-SIZED!*

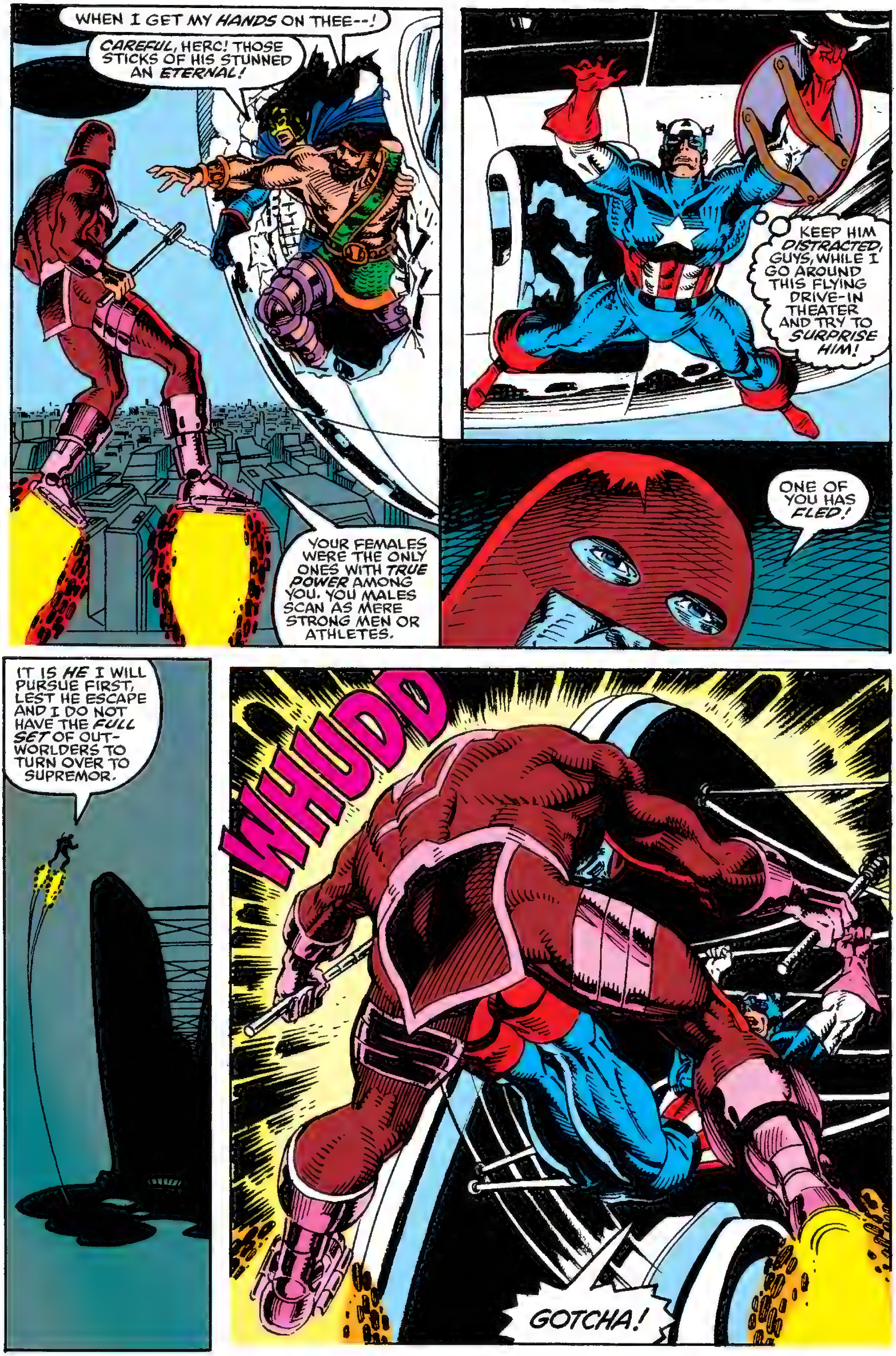

AT THAT MOMENT, SOME FIVE KILOMETERS BENEATH HALA'S SURFACE, AT THE SITE OF A SUBTERRANEAN POWER STATION ABANDONED SEVERAL HUNDRED SOLAR CYCLES AGO...
<THOSE I *SEEK*, I AM LED TO BELIEVE, ARE *BELOW*.>
<IF THEY ARE *NOT*, I SHALL *QUIT* THIS DISMAL SPHERE, IGNORE THE VOICE THAT ENTICES ME WITH KNOWLEDGE OF MY ANCIENT BEGINNINGS, AND WANDER THE *STARLANES* ONCE MORE--!>
<WHO *GOES* THERE?>
<I DO. I, *ULTIMUS*!>
<AND WHO ARE *YOU*?>
<I AM *SHATTERAX*, FIRST OF THE NEW BREED OF KREE TECHNO-WARRIORS!>
<AND I AM *KORATH THE PURSUER*, PROTOTYPE OF THE CYBERNETIC SOLDIER THE SHORTSIGHTED CURRENT REGIME HAS REFUSED TO FUND!>
<NEITHER OF YOU SOUND LIKE THE ONE WHO *SUMMONED* ME HERE.>

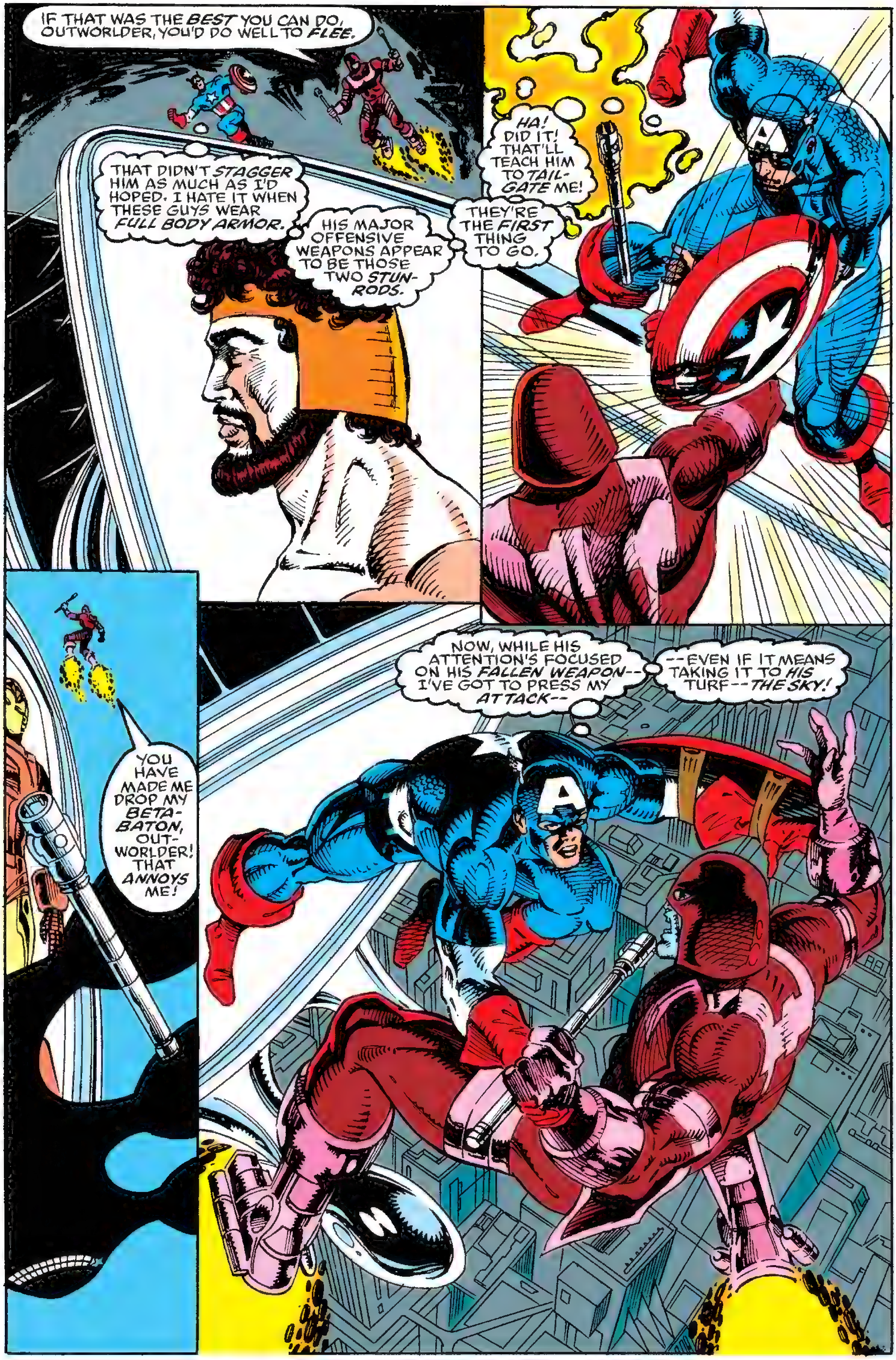

<THEY ARE NOT. *I* SUMMONED YOU.>
<I... *SUPREMOR*, CORPOREAL HOST OF THE MATCHLESS INTELLECT THAT ONCE *RULED* THE KREE EMPIRE--
<--AND WITH YOUR HELP SHALL *RULE AGAIN!*>
ABOVE...
LOOKS LIKE THE HIGH AND MIGHTY KREE CAPITAL CITY HAS A *SEAMY UNDERBELLY*, HUH, CAP?
LOOKS THAT WAY.
EVERY LEVEL WE'VE DESCENDED THE WORKING CONDITIONS HAVE BECOME *WORSE*.
I'M REMINDED OF THE WAY THE *ALPHA PRIMITIVES* USED TO LIVE IN THE SUBCITY BENEATH ATTILAN.
THERE CAN SURELY BE NO *GRIMMER* A PLACE THAN HERE, FAIR *CRYSTAL!*
HEY, CHECK *THAT* OUT, CAP!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE THE *MAN OF THE HOUR!*
THE KREE VERSION OF A *WANTED POSTER*, DANE.

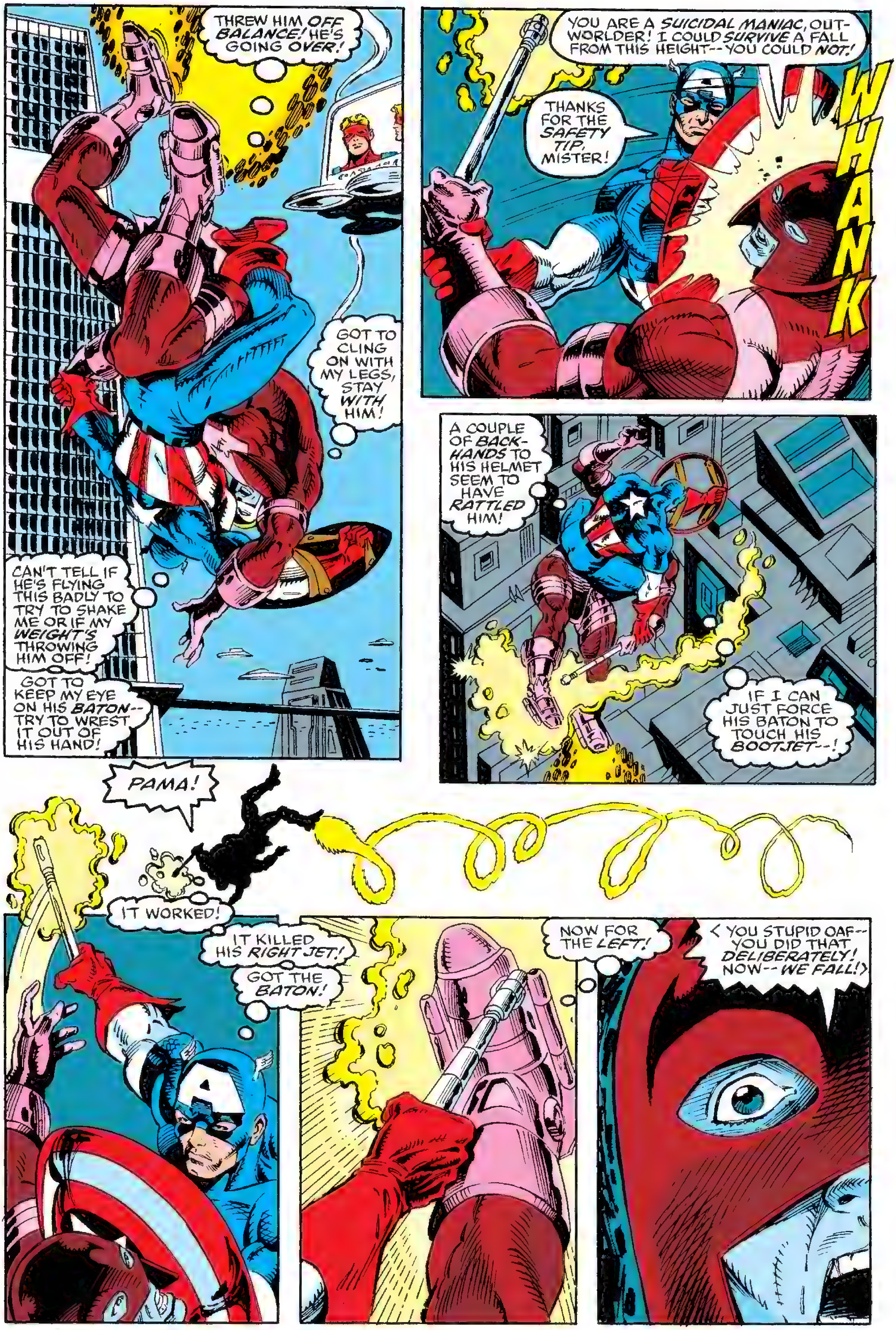

COMMUNICARD'S BEEPING, IRON MAN IN TROUBLE...?
IRON MAN?
HAWK AND I HAVE LOCATED THE CENTRAL *GOVERNMENT BUILDING*. PROBLEM IS IT'S DIFFICULT TO GIVE *DIRECTIONS*. IF YOU CAN GET ENOUGH ALTITUDE, YOU'LL SEE IT.
IT'S GOT A SPIRE WITH A SPHERE WITH A RING AROUND IT, LIKE *SATURN*.
DON'T GO IN. *WAIT* TILL WE GET THERE.
I'LL GIVE YOU AN *HOUR*. AT THAT TIME WE'RE GOING *IN*, WITH OR *WITHOUT* YOU. IRON MAN OUT.
Avengers
WE'RE GOING TO NEED *TRANSPORTATION*-- SOMETHING THAT FLIES.
WHY NOT THAT *WANTED POSTER* BLIMP?
HOW DO WE GET *UP* THERE?
JOIN HANDS AND I'LL *LEVITATE* US.
BUT WE'D BE *SEEN!*
I COULD CREATE A *DISTRACTION*.
WATCH!

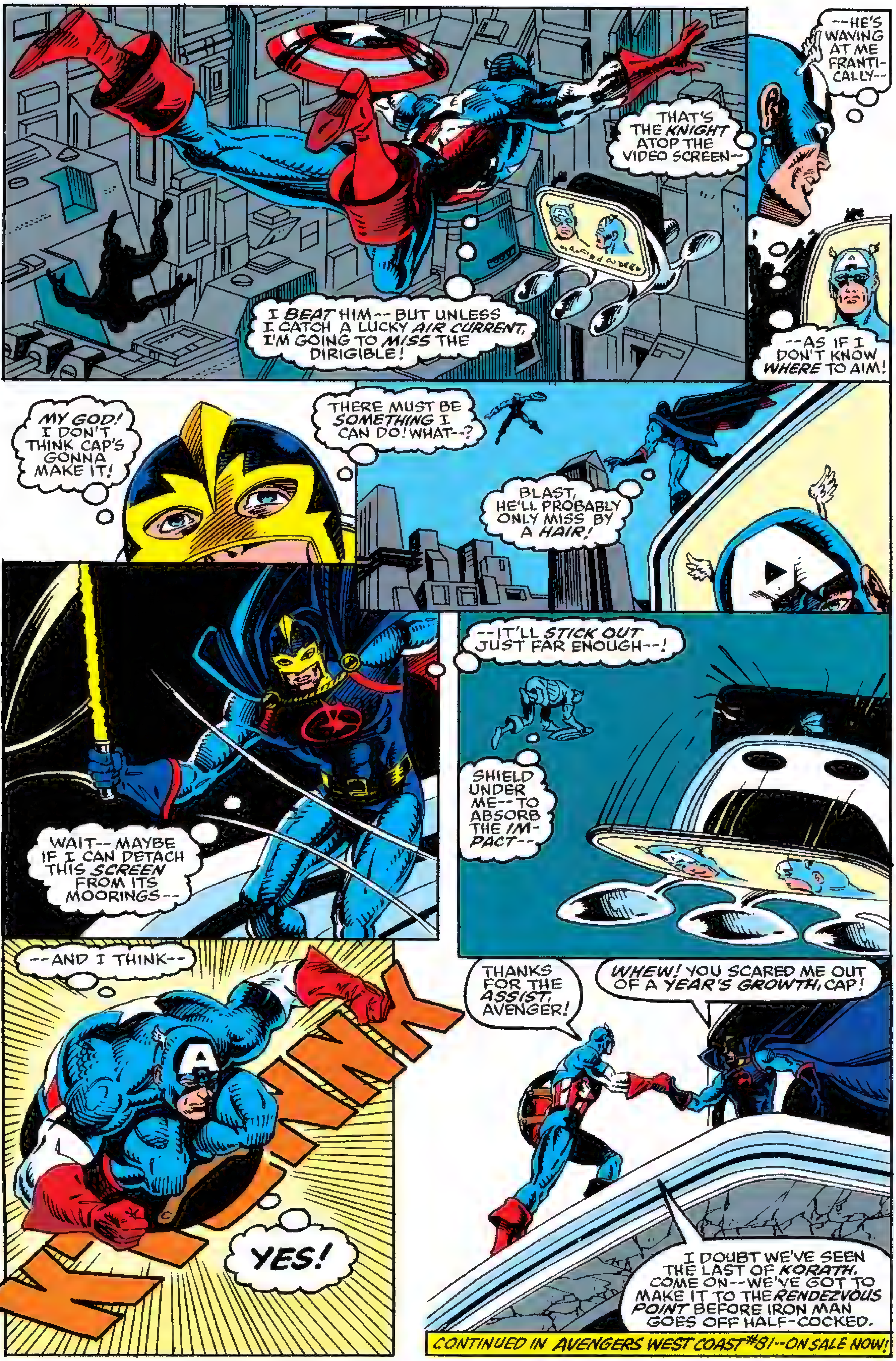

HANG TIGHT, HERCULES-- WE'RE *ALMOST THERE!*
MILADY, I SHALL CLING TO THY FAIR *HAND* AS THY RAIMENT CLINGS TO YOUR *EXQUISITE FORM!*
I APPRECIATE THE *THOUGHT,* HERKY-- BUT *NOT NOW.*
CRYS'S *FIRE GEYSER* SEEMS TO BE DOING THE TRICK--
--IT'S A MUCH GREATER SPECTACLE THAN *WE* ARE.
THERE APPEARS TO BE A *COCKPIT* BENEATH THAT HOVERCRAFT. I'LL TAKE US THERE.
AND...
<CONGRATULATIONS, PILOT. YOU'VE JUST BEEN *HIJACKED* BY THE MOST WANTED PEOPLE ON ALL HALA!>
THERE. THE *BUILDING* IRON MAN WAS TALKING ABOUT. HAVE HIM TAKE US TOWARD IT.
CAP! UNIDENTIFIED *BOGEY* COMING UP BEHIND US! LOOKS LIKE A *GUY WITH BOOTJETS!*


<SUPREMOR WOULD HAVE US *ASSIST* THE ALL-BUT-INEFFECTUAL ACCUSERS IN THEIR SEARCH FOR THE *EARTH FUGITIVES.* THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE, HE CLAIMS, WOULD LIKE TO ASSIMILATE THEIR INTELLECTS.>
<PINPOINTING ANOMALOUS BRAIN PATTERNS IS CHILD'S PLAY FOR ONE ENDOWED WITH CYBERPSIONIC *SCANNERS.*>
<BUT AT THE VERY LEAST THIS SHOULD PROVIDE ME WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE HOW WELL MY ARSENAL PERFORMS IN A *COMBAT SITUATION.*>
ZZZASSSH
<THIS ONE SCANS AS THE *MOST POWERFUL* OF THE GROUP. I'LL INCAPACITATE HER *FIRST!*>
OHHH!
ZPP
OFFWORLDERS! YOU MAY HAVE ELUDED THE ACCUSERS WITH YOUR FEEBLE DISGUISES BUT NOT *KORATH THE PURSUER!*
HE ZAPPED *SERS!*--AND WE ALL REVERTED TO OUR *UNIFORMS!* I'VE GOT MY *PHOTONIC SWORD* BACK! JUST WISH THERE WAS MORE *ROOM* TO--
CRYS--!
ZPP
CRAVEN JACKAL! ATTACKING OUR *WOMENFOLK*--!

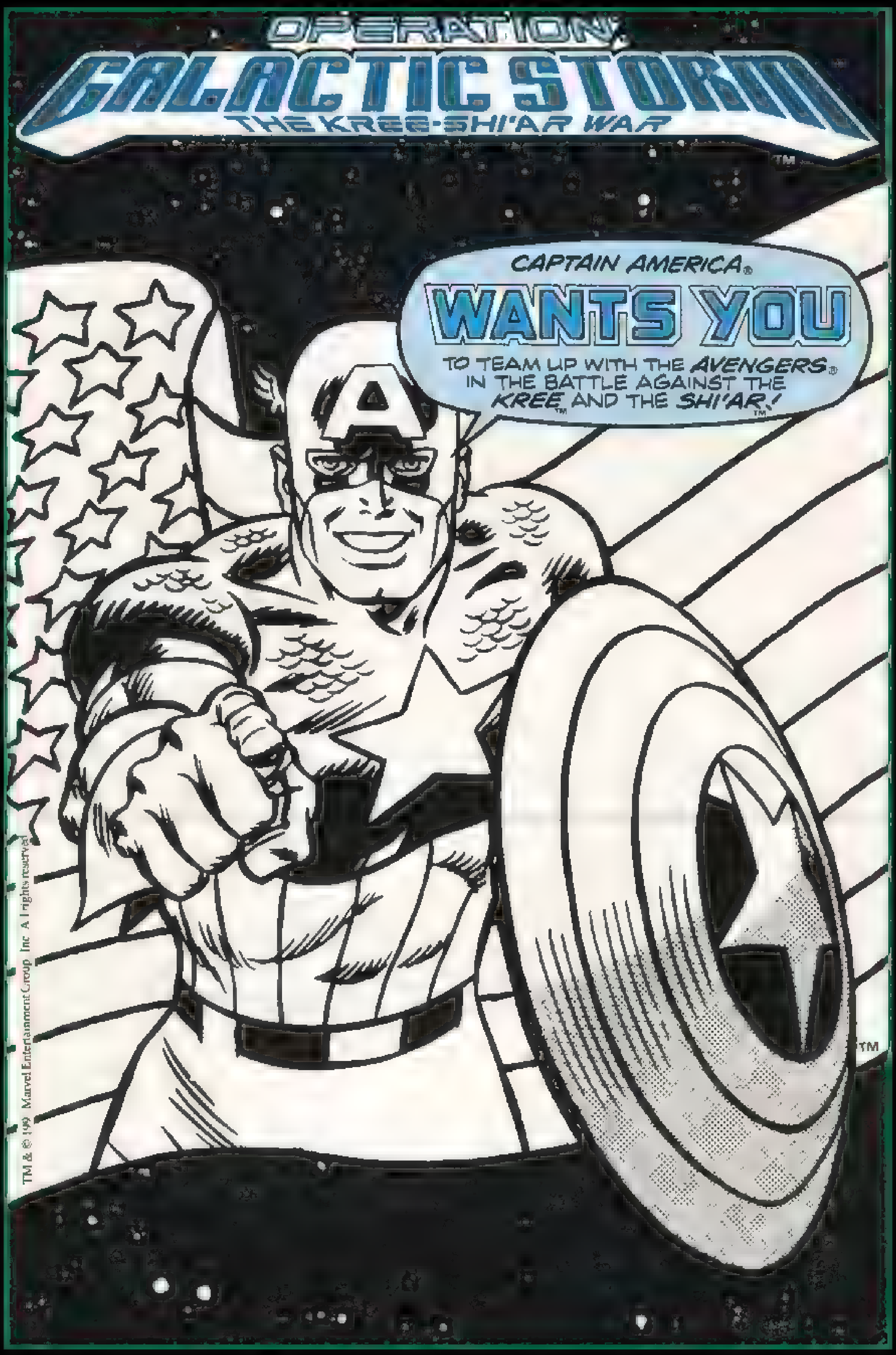

WHEN I GET MY *HANDS* ON THEE--!
CAREFUL, HERC! THOSE STICKS OF HIS STUNNED AN *ETERNAL!*
YOUR FEMALES WERE THE ONLY ONES WITH *TRUE POWER* AMONG YOU. YOU MALES SCAN AS MERE STRONG MEN OR ATHLETES.
KEEP HIM *DISTRACTED,* GUYS, WHILE I GO AROUND THIS FLYING DRIVE-IN THEATER AND TRY TO *SURPRISE HIM!*
ONE OF YOU HAS *FLED!*
IT IS *HE* I WILL PURSUE FIRST, LEST HE ESCAPE AND I DO NOT HAVE THE *FULL SET* OF OUT-WORLDERS TO TURN OVER TO SUPREMOR.
WHUDD
GOTCHA!


IF THAT WAS THE *BEST* YOU CAN DO, OUTWORLDER, YOU'D DO WELL TO *FLEE.*
THAT DIDN'T *STAGGER* HIM AS MUCH AS I'D HOPED. I HATE IT WHEN THESE GUYS WEAR *FULL BODY ARMOR.*
HIS MAJOR OFFENSIVE WEAPONS APPEAR TO BE THOSE TWO *STUN-RODS.*
THEY'RE THE *FIRST* THING TO GO.
HA! DID IT! THAT'LL TEACH HIM TO *TAILGATE* ME!
YOU HAVE MADE ME DROP MY *BETA-BATON,* OUTWORLDER! THAT *ANNOYS* ME!
NOW, WHILE HIS ATTENTION'S FOCUSED ON HIS *FALLEN WEAPON*-- I'VE GOT TO PRESS MY *ATTACK*--
--EVEN IF IT MEANS TAKING IT TO *HIS* TURF--*THE SKY!*


THREW HIM *OFF BALANCE!* HE'S GOING *OVER!*
GOT TO CLING ON WITH MY LEGS, STAY *WITH* HIM!
CAN'T TELL IF HE'S FLYING THIS BADLY TO TRY TO SHAKE ME OR IF MY *WEIGHT'S* THROWING HIM OFF!
GOT TO KEEP MY EYE ON HIS *BATON*-- TRY TO WREST IT OUT OF HIS HAND!
YOU ARE A *SUICIDAL MANIAC*, OUT-WORLDER! I COULD *SURVIVE* A FALL FROM THIS HEIGHT--YOU COULD *NOT!*
THANKS FOR THE *SAFETY TIP*, MISTER!
WHHANK
A COUPLE OF *BACK-HANDS* TO HIS HELMET SEEM TO HAVE *RATTLED* HIM!
IF I CAN JUST FORCE HIS BATON TO TOUCH HIS *BOOTJET*--!
PAMA!
IT WORKED!
IT KILLED HIS *RIGHT JET!*
GOT THE *BATON!*
NOW FOR THE *LEFT!*
< YOU STUPID OAF-- YOU DID THAT *DELIBERATELY!* NOW--*WE FALL!*>


I BEAT HIM-- BUT UNLESS I CATCH A LUCKY AIR CURRENT, I'M GOING TO MISS THE DIRIGIBLE!
THAT'S THE KNIGHT ATOP THE VIDEO SCREEN--
--HE'S WAVING AT ME FRANTICALLY--
--AS IF I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO AIM!
MY GOD! I DON'T THINK CAP'S GONNA MAKE IT!
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I CAN DO! WHAT--?
BLAST, HE'LL PROBABLY ONLY MISS BY A HAIR!
WAIT-- MAYBE IF I CAN DETACH THIS SCREEN FROM ITS MOORINGS--
--IT'LL STICK OUT JUST FAR ENOUGH--!
SHIELD UNDER ME--TO ABSORB THE IMPACT--
--AND I THINK--
KLANK
YES!
THANKS FOR THE ASSIST, AVENGER!
WHEW! YOU SCARED ME OUT OF A YEAR'S GROWTH, CAP!
I DOUBT WE'VE SEEN THE LAST OF KORATH. COME ON--WE'VE GOT TO MAKE IT TO THE RENDEZVOUS POINT BEFORE IRON MAN GOES OFF HALF-COCKED.

CONTINUED IN AVENGERS WEST COAST #81--ON SALE NOW!


OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
THE KREE-SHI'AR WAR
CAPTAIN AMERICA® WANTS YOU TO TEAM UP WITH THE AVENGERS® IN THE BATTLE AGAINST THE KREE™ AND THE SHI'AR!™
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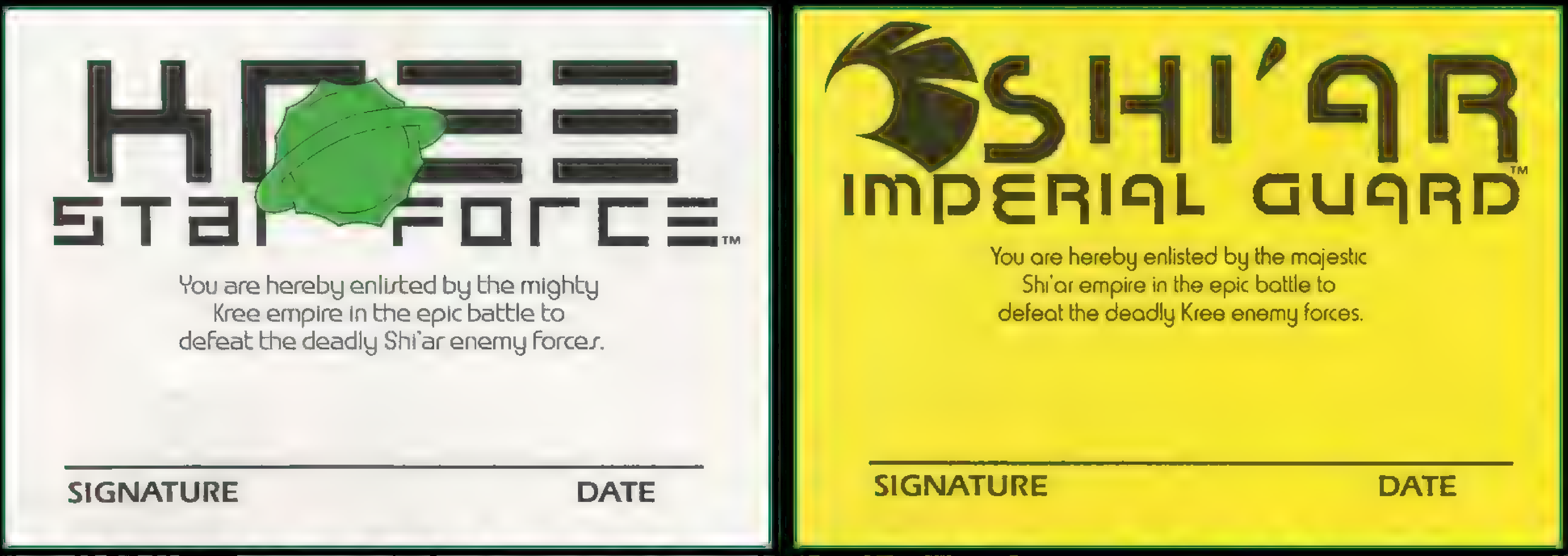
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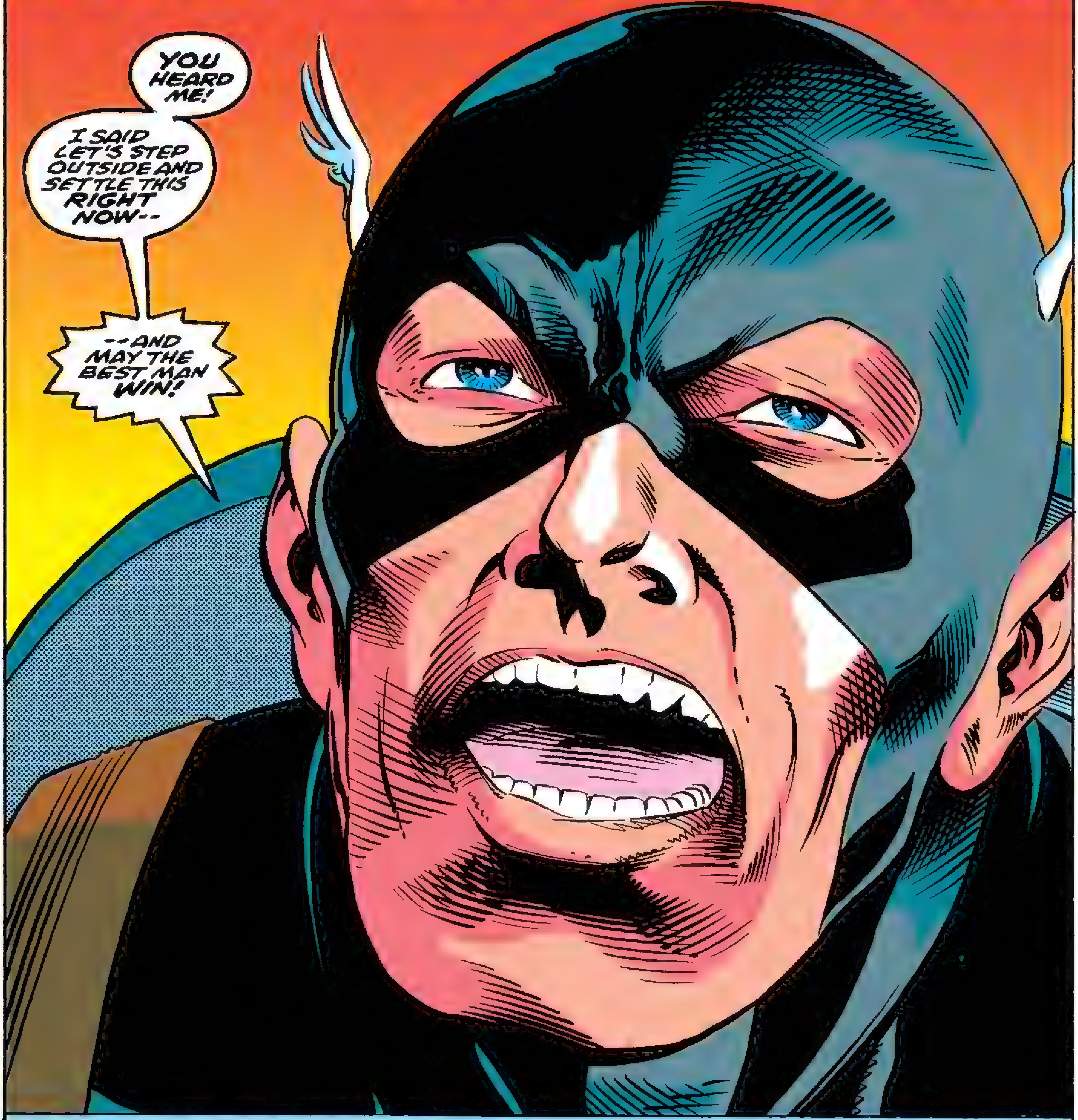
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

PART 9

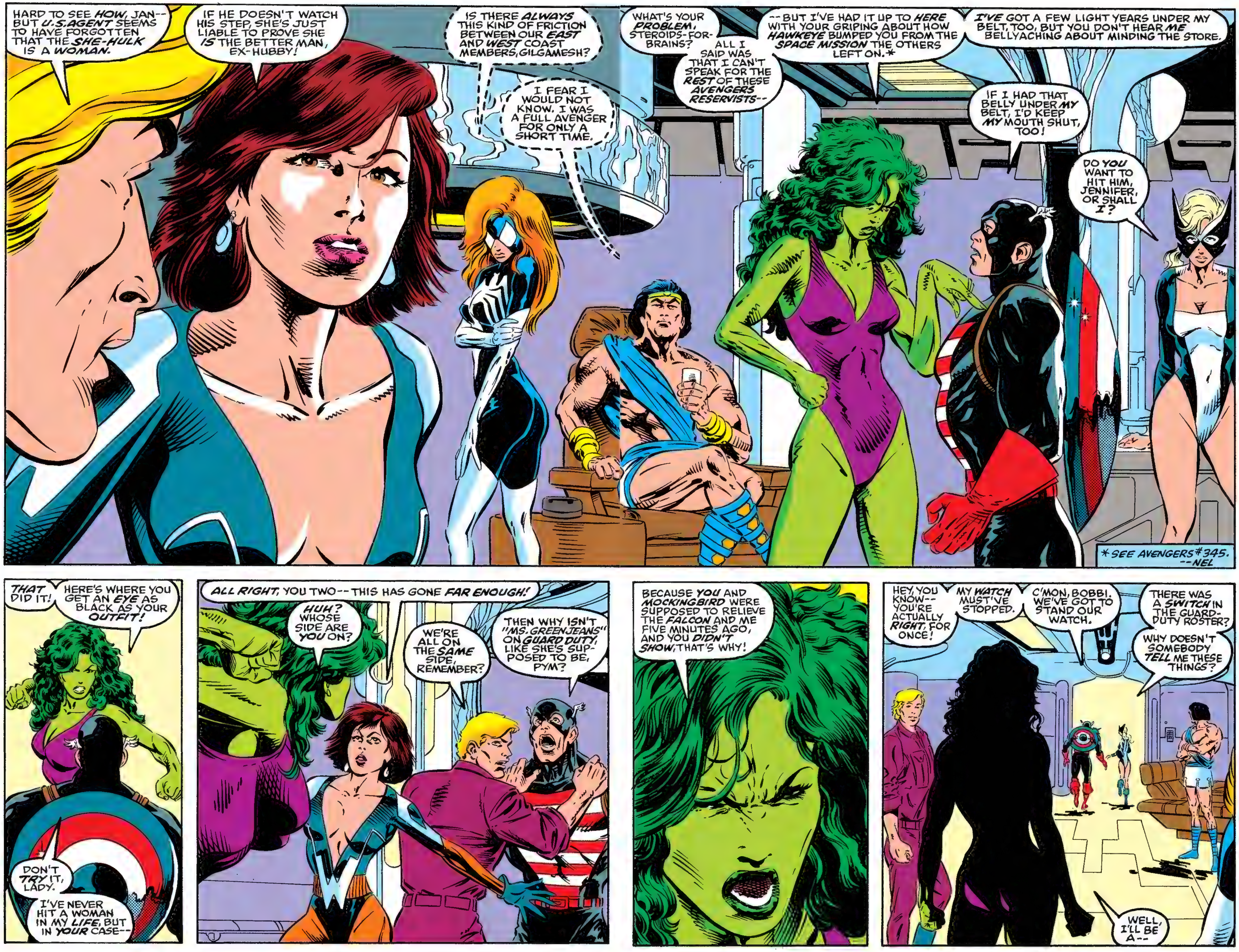
AVENGERS
WEST
COAST

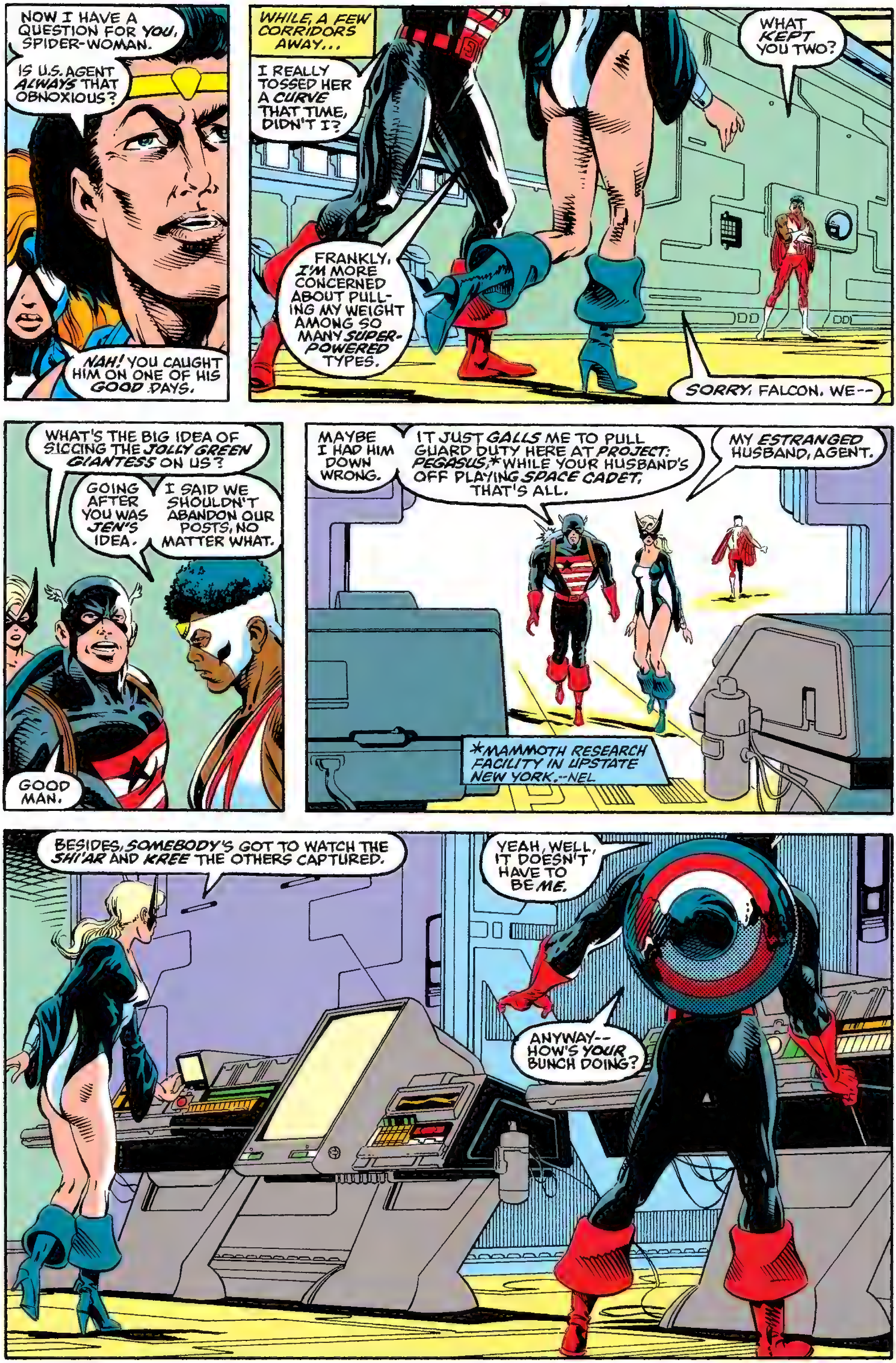
*TWO GALACTIC EMPIRES — THE MILITARISTIC **KREE** AND THE MATRIARCHAL **SHI'AR** — ARE AT WAR, AND THE EARTH IS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE. WHILE TWO TEAMS OF **AVENGERS** HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE ALIEN HEADS OF STATE, A THIRD TEAM REMAINS ON EARTH TO GUARD THE HOMEFRONT!*

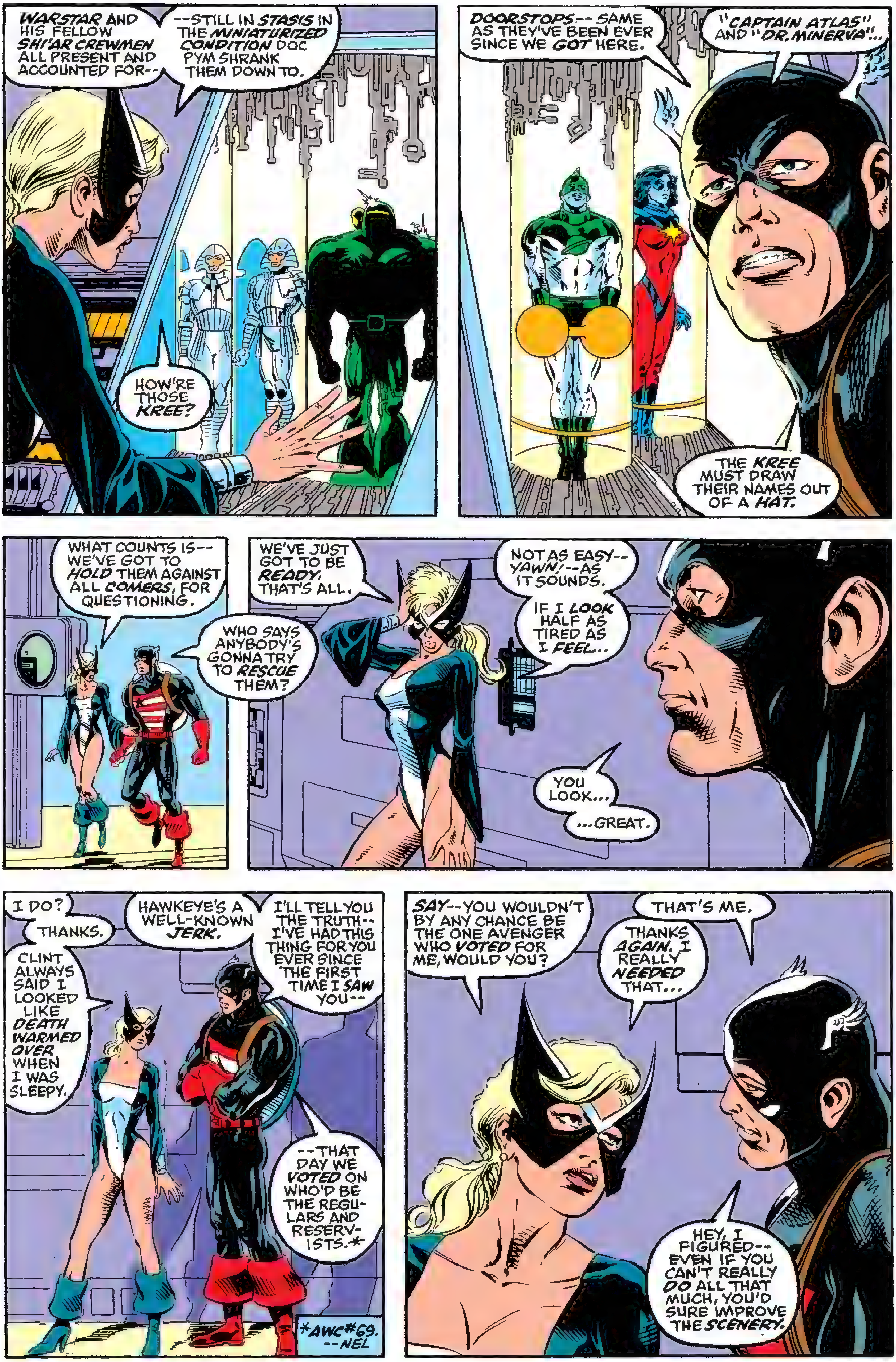
THEY ALSO SERVE...

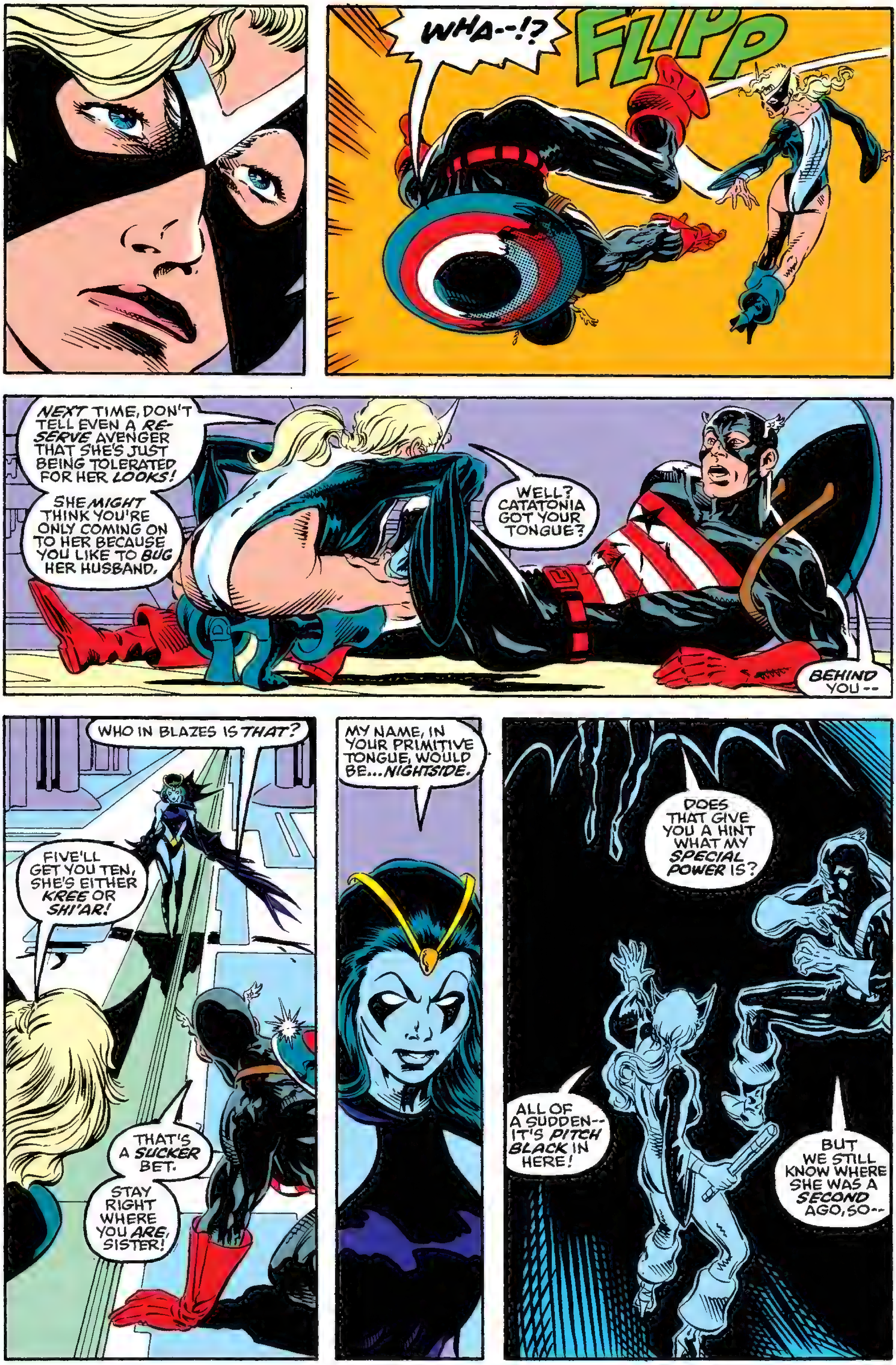

YOU HEARD ME!
I SAID LET'S STEP OUTSIDE AND SETTLE THIS RIGHT NOW--
--AND MAY THE BEST MAN WIN!

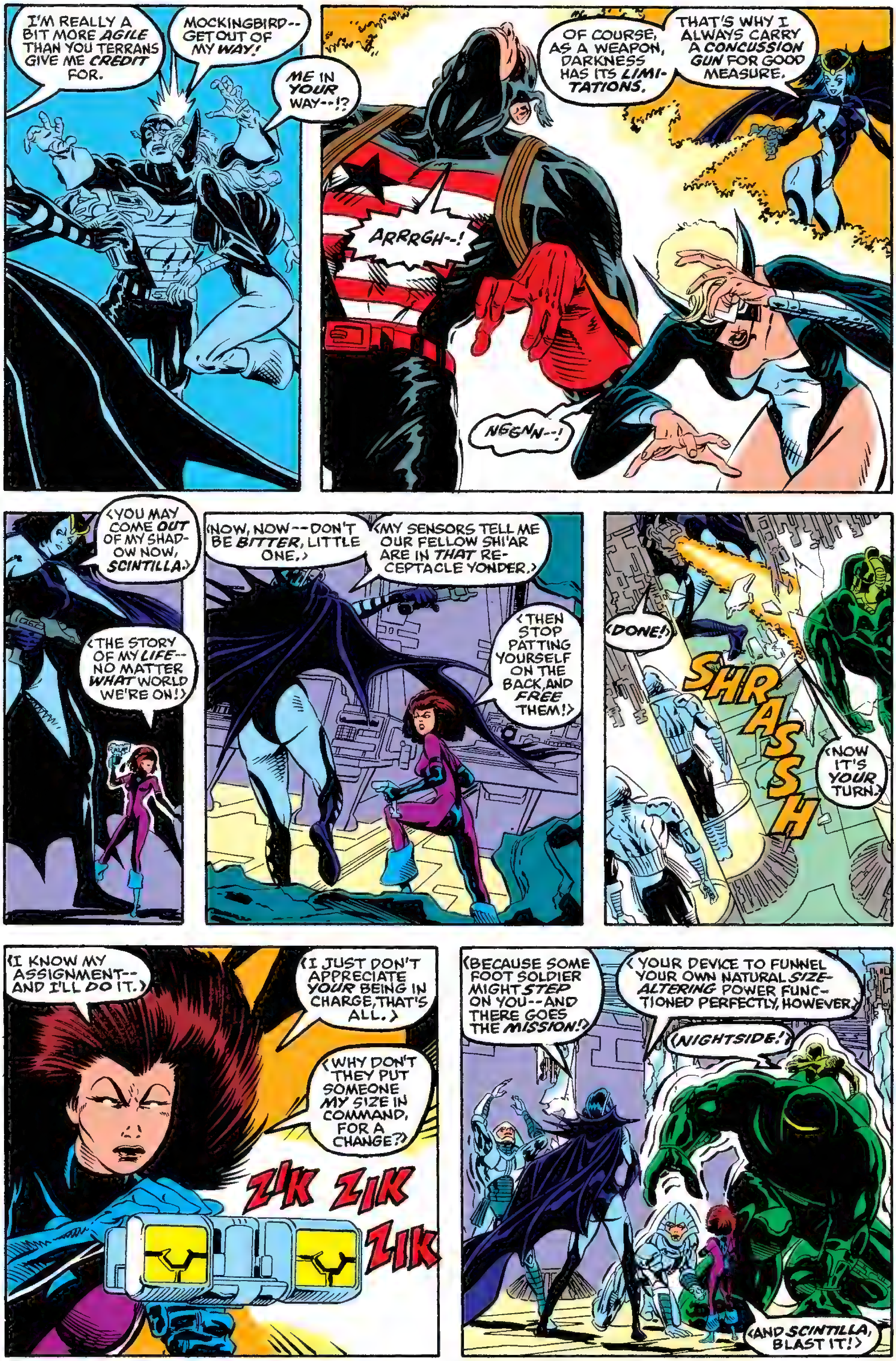
ROY & DANN THOMAS *WRITERS*
DAVE ROSS *PENCILER*
TIM DZON *INKER*
JOE ROSEN *LETTERER*
BOB SHAREN *COLORIST*
NEL YOMTOV *EDITOR*
TOM DEFALCO *EDITOR IN CHIEF*

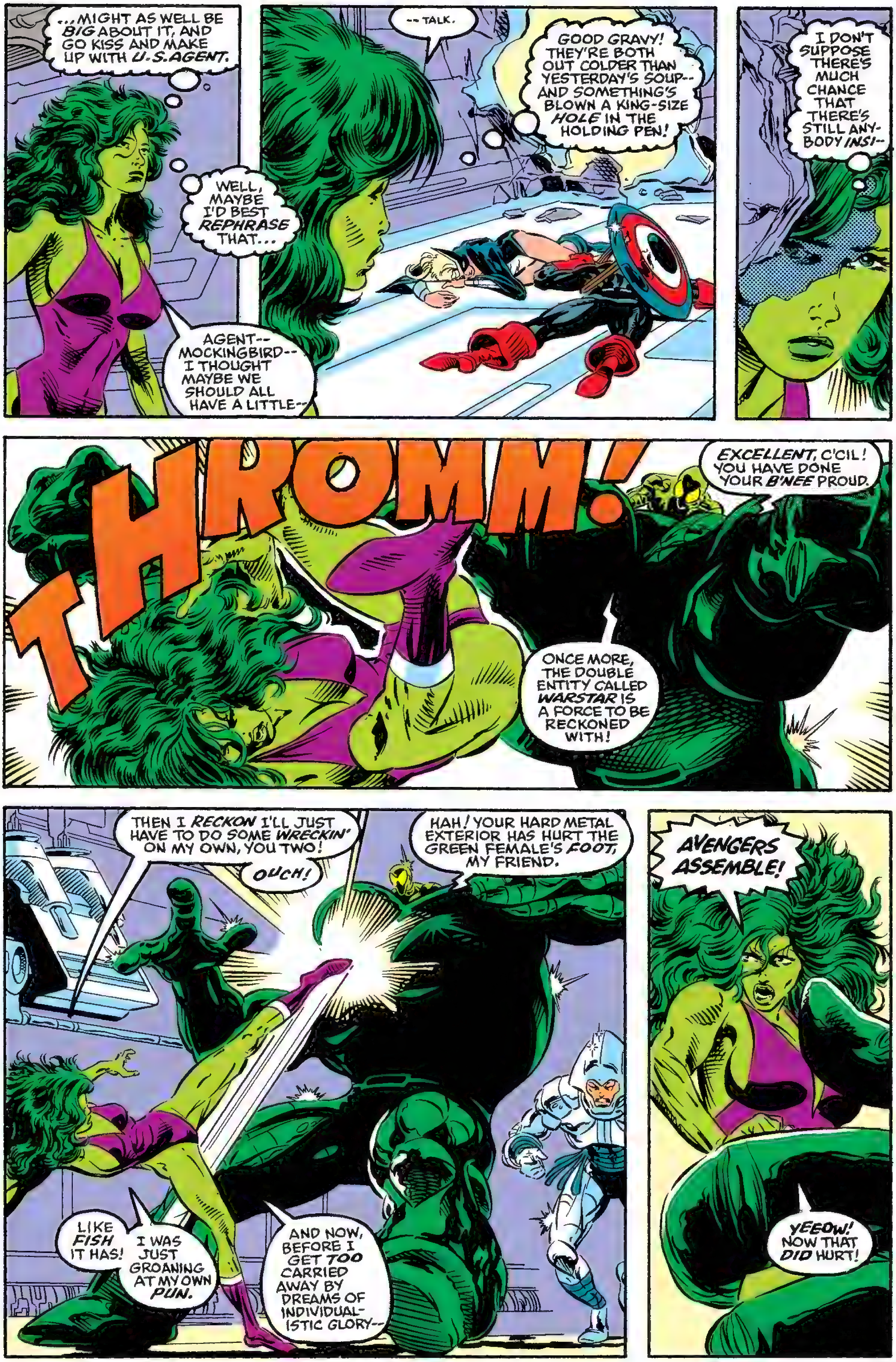

HARD TO SEE HOW, JAN-- BUT U.S. AGENT SEEMS TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT THE SHE-HULK IS A WOMAN.
IF HE DOESN'T WATCH HIS STEP, SHE'S JUST LIABLE TO PROVE SHE IS THE BETTER MAN, EX-HUBBY!
IS THERE ALWAYS THIS KIND OF FRICTION BETWEEN OUR EAST AND WEST COAST MEMBERS, GILGAMESH?
I FEAR I WOULD NOT KNOW. I WAS A FULL AVENGER FOR ONLY A SHORT TIME.
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, STEROIDS-FOR-BRAINS?
ALL I SAID WAS THAT I CAN'T SPEAK FOR THE REST OF THESE AVENGERS RESERVISTS--
--BUT I'VE HAD IT UP TO HERE WITH YOUR GRIPING ABOUT HOW HAWKEYE BUMPED YOU FROM THE SPACE MISSION THE OTHERS LEFT ON.*
I'VE GOT A FEW LIGHT YEARS UNDER MY BELT, TOO, BUT YOU DON'T HEAR ME BELLYACHING ABOUT MINDING THE STORE.
IF I HAD THAT BELLY UNDER MY BELT, I'D KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT, TOO!
DO YOU WANT TO HIT HIM, JENNIFER, OR SHALL I?
* SEE AVENGERS #345. --NEL
THAT DID IT!
HERE'S WHERE YOU GET AN EYE AS BLACK AS YOUR OUTFIT!
DON'T TRY IT, LADY.
I'VE NEVER HIT A WOMAN IN MY LIFE, BUT IN YOUR CASE--
ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO-- THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!
HUH? WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?
WE'RE ALL ON THE SAME SIDE, REMEMBER?
THEN WHY ISN'T "MS. GREENJEANS" ON GUARD DUTY, LIKE SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE, PYM?
BECAUSE YOU AND MOCKINGBIRD WERE SUPPOSED TO RELIEVE THE FALCON AND ME FIVE MINUTES AGO, AND YOU DIDN'T SHOW, THAT'S WHY!
HEY, YOU KNOW-- YOU'RE ACTUALLY RIGHT, FOR ONCE!
MY WATCH MUST'VE STOPPED.
C'MON, BOBBI. WE'VE GOT TO STAND OUR WATCH.
THERE WAS A SWITCH IN THE GUARD-DUTY ROSTER?
WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY TELL ME THESE THINGS?
WELL, I'LL BE A--

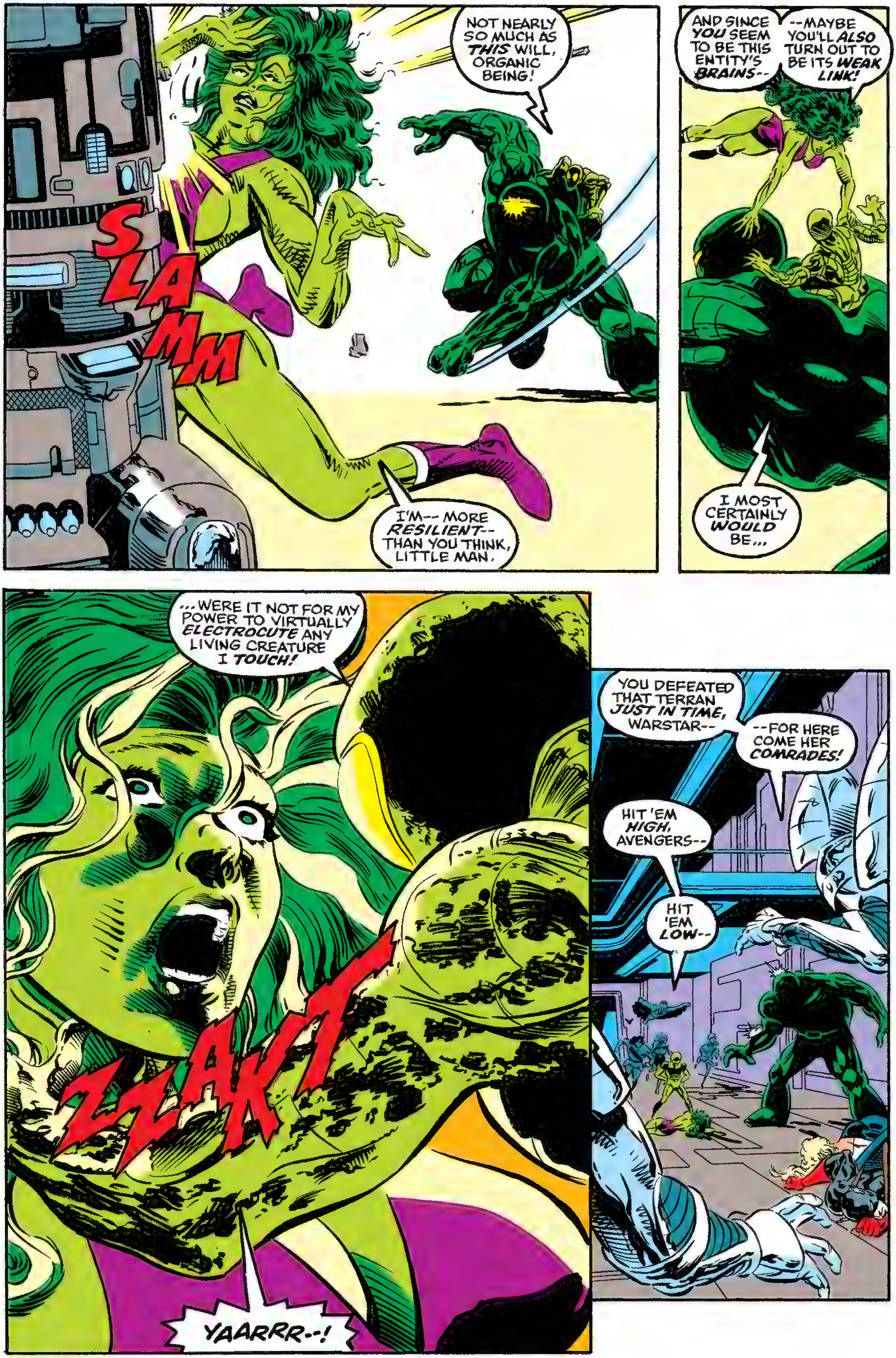

NOW I HAVE A QUESTION FOR *YOU,* SPIDER-WOMAN.
IS U.S. AGENT *ALWAYS* THAT OBNOXIOUS?
NAH! YOU CAUGHT HIM ON ONE OF HIS *GOOD* DAYS.
WHILE, A FEW CORRIDORS AWAY...
I REALLY TOSSED HER A *CURVE* THAT TIME, DIDN'T I?
FRANKLY, *I'M* MORE CONCERNED ABOUT PULLING MY WEIGHT AMONG SO MANY *SUPER-POWERED* TYPES.
WHAT *KEPT* YOU TWO?
SORRY, FALCON. WE--
WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA OF SICCING THE *JOLLY GREEN GIANTESS* ON US?
GOING AFTER YOU WAS *JEN'S* IDEA.
I SAID WE SHOULDN'T ABANDON OUR POSTS, NO MATTER WHAT.
GOOD MAN.
MAYBE I HAD HIM DOWN WRONG.
IT JUST *GALLS* ME TO PULL GUARD DUTY HERE AT *PROJECT: PEGASUS,** WHILE YOUR HUSBAND'S OFF PLAYING *SPACE CADET,* THAT'S ALL.
MY *ESTRANGED* HUSBAND, AGENT.
**MAMMOTH RESEARCH FACILITY IN UPSTATE NEW YORK.--NEL*
BESIDES, *SOMEBODY'S* GOT TO WATCH THE *SHI'AR* AND *KREE* THE OTHERS CAPTURED.
YEAH, WELL, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE *ME.*
ANYWAY-- HOW'S *YOUR* BUNCH DOING?

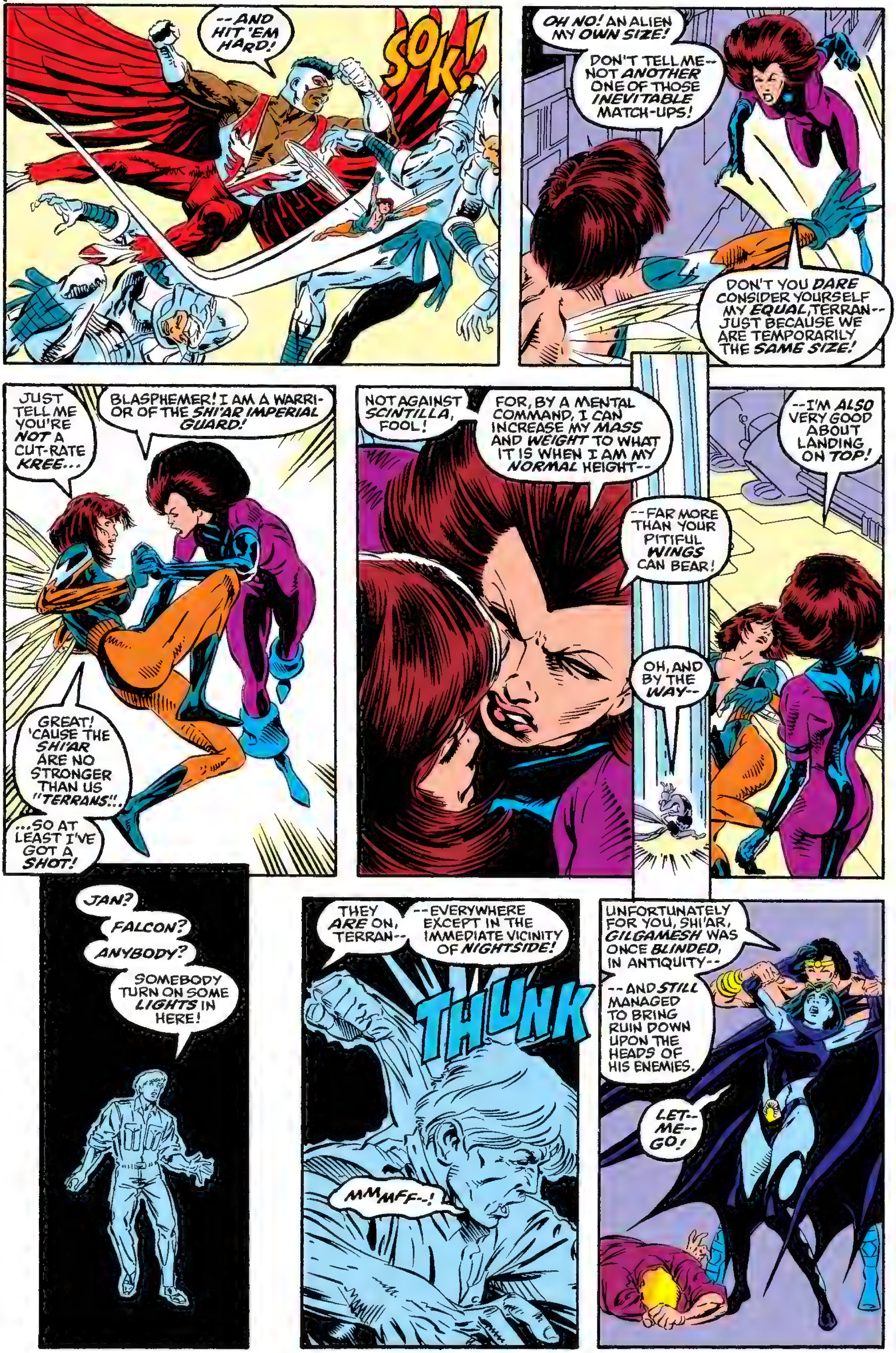

WARSTAR AND HIS FELLOW SHI'AR CREWMEN ALL PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR--
--STILL IN STASIS IN THE MINIATURIZED CONDITION DOC PYM SHRANK THEM DOWN TO.
HOW'RE THOSE KREE?
DOORSTOPS-- SAME AS THEY'VE BEEN EVER SINCE WE GOT HERE.
"CAPTAIN ATLAS" AND "DR. MINERVA"...
THE KREE MUST DRAW THEIR NAMES OUT OF A HAT.
WHAT COUNTS IS-- WE'VE GOT TO HOLD THEM AGAINST ALL COMERS, FOR QUESTIONING.
WHO SAYS ANYBODY'S GONNA TRY TO RESCUE THEM?
WE'VE JUST GOT TO BE READY, THAT'S ALL.
NOT AS EASY-- YAWN! --AS IT SOUNDS.
IF I LOOK HALF AS TIRED AS I FEEL...
YOU LOOK...
...GREAT.
I DO?
THANKS.
CLINT ALWAYS SAID I LOOKED LIKE DEATH WARMED OVER WHEN I WAS SLEEPY.
HAWKEYE'S A WELL-KNOWN JERK.
I'LL TELL YOU THE TRUTH-- I'VE HAD THIS THING FOR YOU EVER SINCE THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU--
--THAT DAY WE VOTED ON WHO'D BE THE REGULARS AND RESERVISTS.*
*AWC#69. --NEL
SAY--YOU WOULDN'T BY ANY CHANCE BE THE ONE AVENGER WHO VOTED FOR ME, WOULD YOU?
THAT'S ME.
THANKS AGAIN. I REALLY NEEDED THAT...
HEY, I FIGURED-- EVEN IF YOU CAN'T REALLY DO ALL THAT MUCH, YOU'D SURE IMPROVE THE SCENERY.

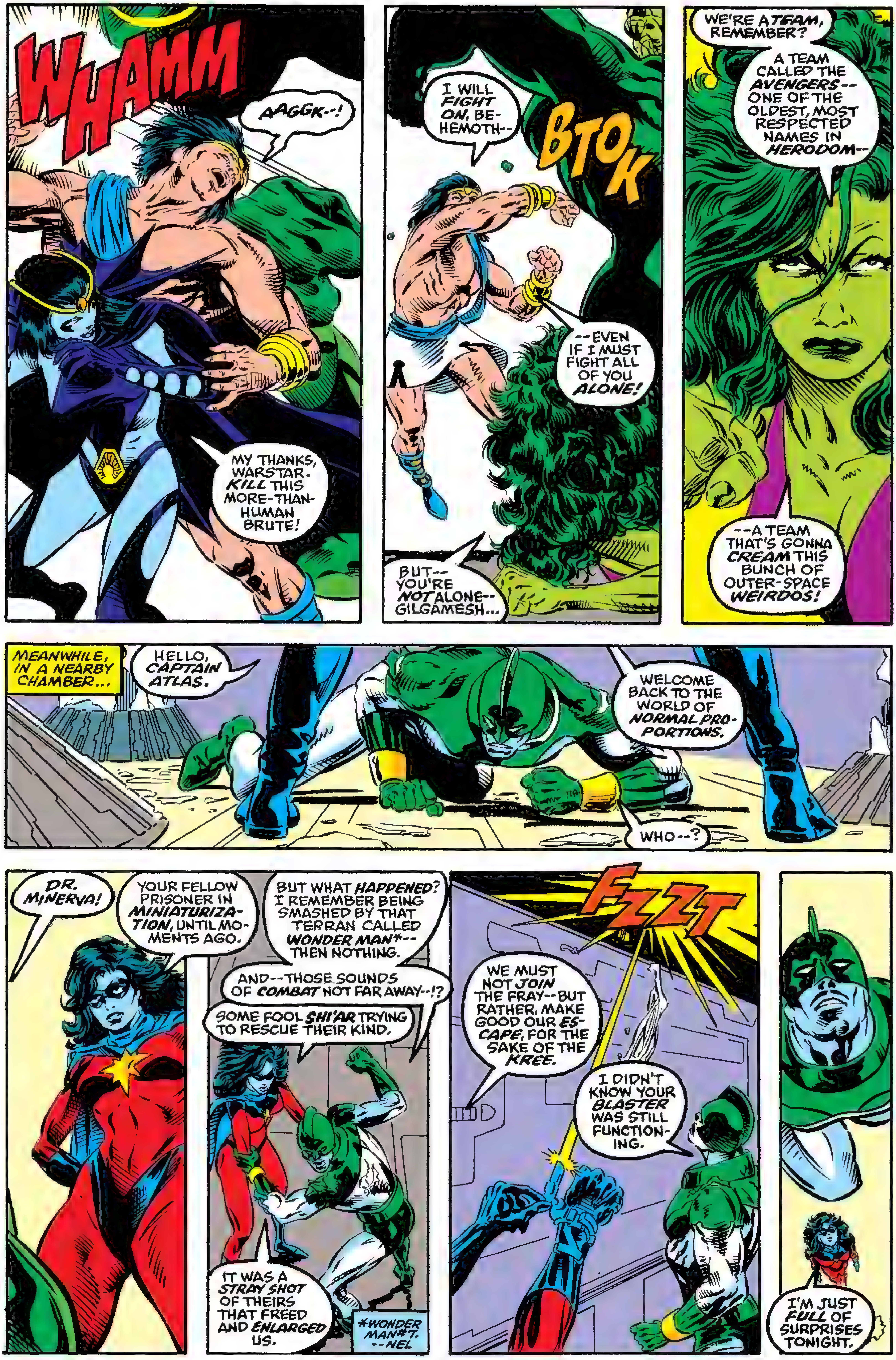

WHA--!?
FLIPP
NEXT TIME, DON'T TELL EVEN A RESERVE AVENGER THAT SHE'S JUST BEING TOLERATED FOR HER LOOKS!
SHE MIGHT THINK YOU'RE ONLY COMING ON TO HER BECAUSE YOU LIKE TO BUG HER HUSBAND.
WELL? CATATONIA GOT YOUR TONGUE?
BEHIND YOU --
WHO IN BLAZES IS THAT?
FIVE'LL GET YOU TEN, SHE'S EITHER KREE OR SHI'AR!
THAT'S A SUCKER BET.
STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE, SISTER!
MY NAME, IN YOUR PRIMITIVE TONGUE, WOULD BE... NIGHTSIDE.
DOES THAT GIVE YOU A HINT WHAT MY SPECIAL POWER IS?
ALL OF A SUDDEN-- IT'S PITCH BLACK IN HERE!
BUT WE STILL KNOW WHERE SHE WAS A SECOND AGO, SO--

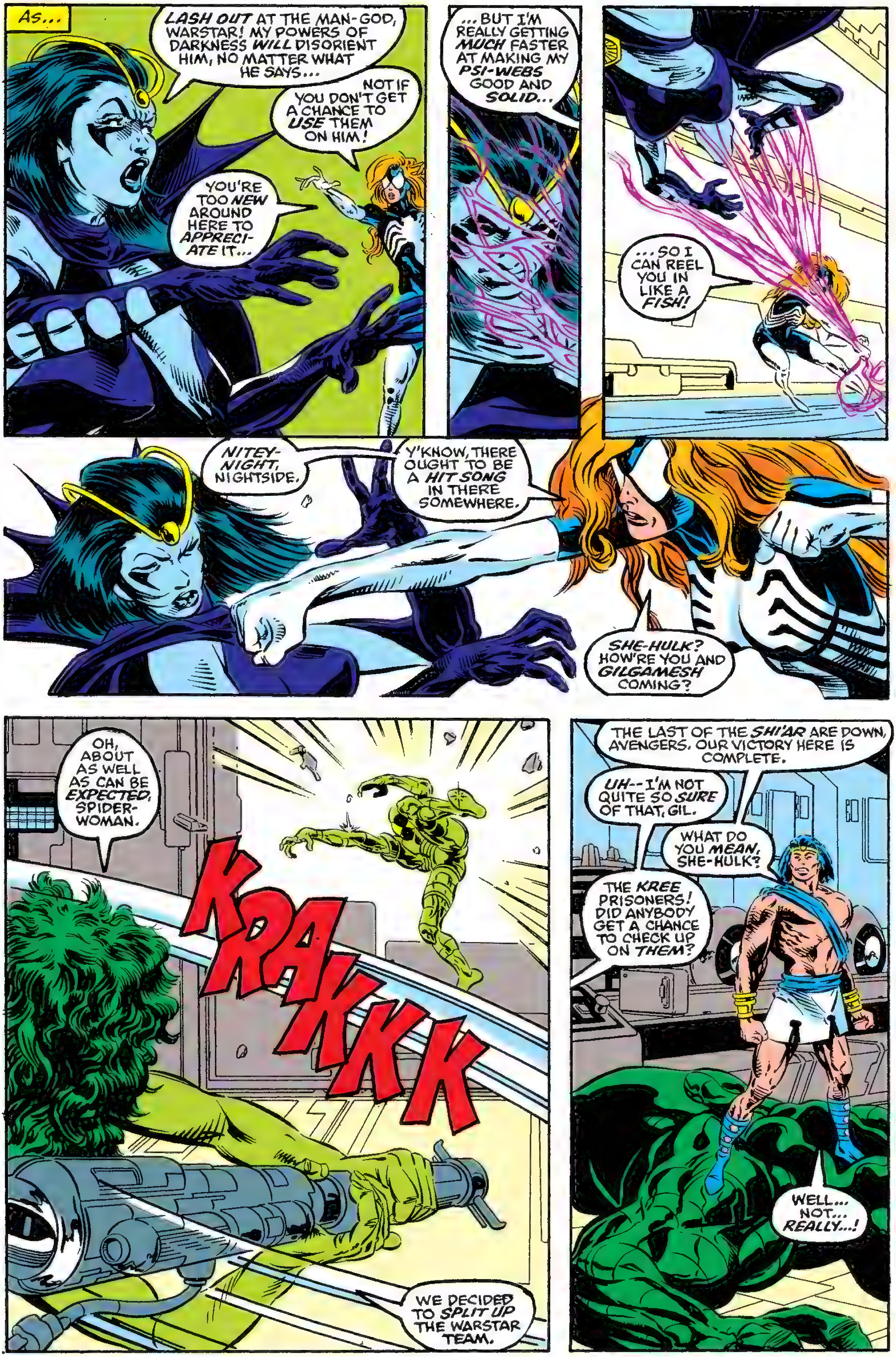

I'M REALLY A BIT MORE *AGILE* THAN YOU TERRANS GIVE ME *CREDIT* FOR.
MOCKINGBIRD-- GET OUT OF MY *WAY!*
ME IN *YOUR* WAY--!?
ARRRGH--!
OF COURSE, AS A WEAPON, DARKNESS HAS ITS *LIMITATIONS.*
THAT'S WHY I ALWAYS CARRY A *CONCUSSION GUN* FOR GOOD MEASURE.
NGGNN--!
‹YOU MAY COME *OUT* OF MY SHADOW NOW, *SCINTILLA.*›
‹THE STORY OF MY *LIFE*-- NO MATTER *WHAT* WORLD WE'RE ON!›
‹NOW, NOW-- DON'T BE *BITTER,* LITTLE ONE.›
‹MY SENSORS TELL ME OUR FELLOW SHI'AR ARE IN *THAT* RECEPTACLE YONDER.›
‹THEN STOP PATTING YOURSELF ON THE BACK, AND *FREE* THEM!›
‹DONE!›
SHRASSH
‹NOW IT'S *YOUR* TURN.›
‹I KNOW MY ASSIGNMENT-- AND I'LL *DO* IT.›
‹I JUST DON'T APPRECIATE *YOUR* BEING IN CHARGE, THAT'S ALL.›
‹WHY DON'T THEY PUT SOMEONE *MY* SIZE IN COMMAND, FOR A CHANGE?›
ZIK ZIK ZIK
‹BECAUSE SOME FOOT SOLDIER MIGHT *STEP* ON YOU-- AND THERE GOES THE *MISSION!*›
‹YOUR DEVICE TO FUNNEL YOUR OWN NATURAL *SIZE-ALTERING* POWER FUNCTIONED PERFECTLY, HOWEVER.›
‹*NIGHTSIDE!*›
‹AND *SCINTILLA,* BLAST IT!›

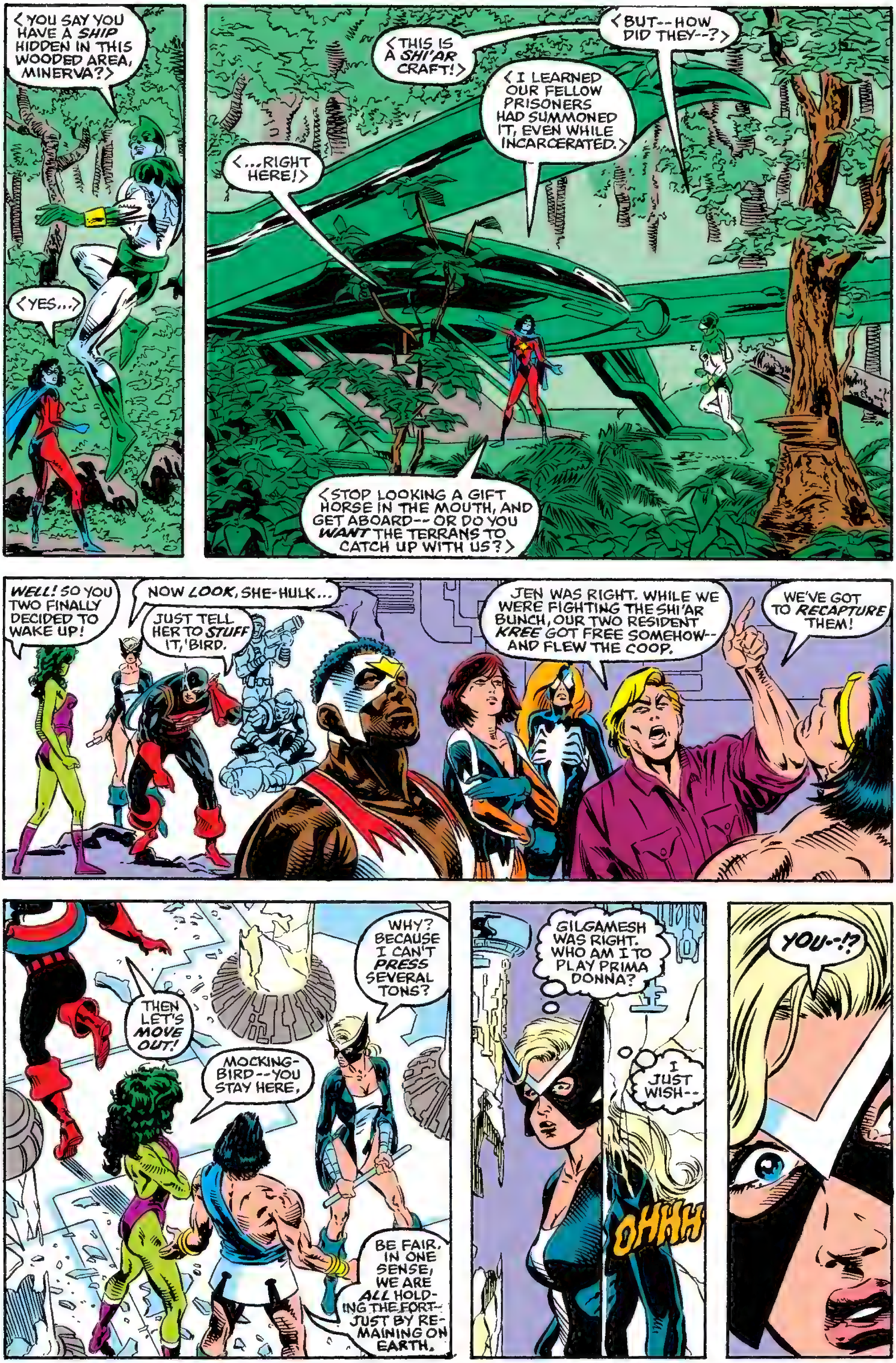

...MIGHT AS WELL BE *BIG* ABOUT IT, AND GO KISS AND MAKE UP WITH *U.S. AGENT.*
WELL, MAYBE I'D BEST *REPHRASE* THAT...
AGENT-- MOCKINGBIRD-- I THOUGHT MAYBE WE SHOULD ALL HAVE A LITTLE--
-- TALK.
GOOD GRAVY! THEY'RE BOTH OUT COLDER THAN YESTERDAY'S SOUP-- AND SOMETHING'S BLOWN A KING-SIZE *HOLE* IN THE HOLDING PEN!
I DON'T SUPPOSE THERE'S MUCH CHANCE THAT THERE'S STILL ANYBODY *INSI*--
THROMM!
EXCELLENT, C'CIL! YOU HAVE DONE YOUR *B'NEE* PROUD.
ONCE MORE, THE DOUBLE ENTITY CALLED *WARSTAR* IS A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH!
THEN I *RECKON* I'LL JUST HAVE TO DO SOME *WRECKIN'* ON MY OWN, YOU TWO!
OUCH!
HAH! YOUR HARD METAL EXTERIOR HAS HURT THE GREEN FEMALE'S *FOOT,* MY FRIEND.
LIKE *FISH* IT HAS!
I WAS JUST GROANING AT MY OWN *PUN.*
AND NOW, BEFORE I GET *TOO* CARRIED AWAY BY DREAMS OF INDIVIDUALISTIC GLORY--
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
YEEOW! NOW THAT *DID* HURT!

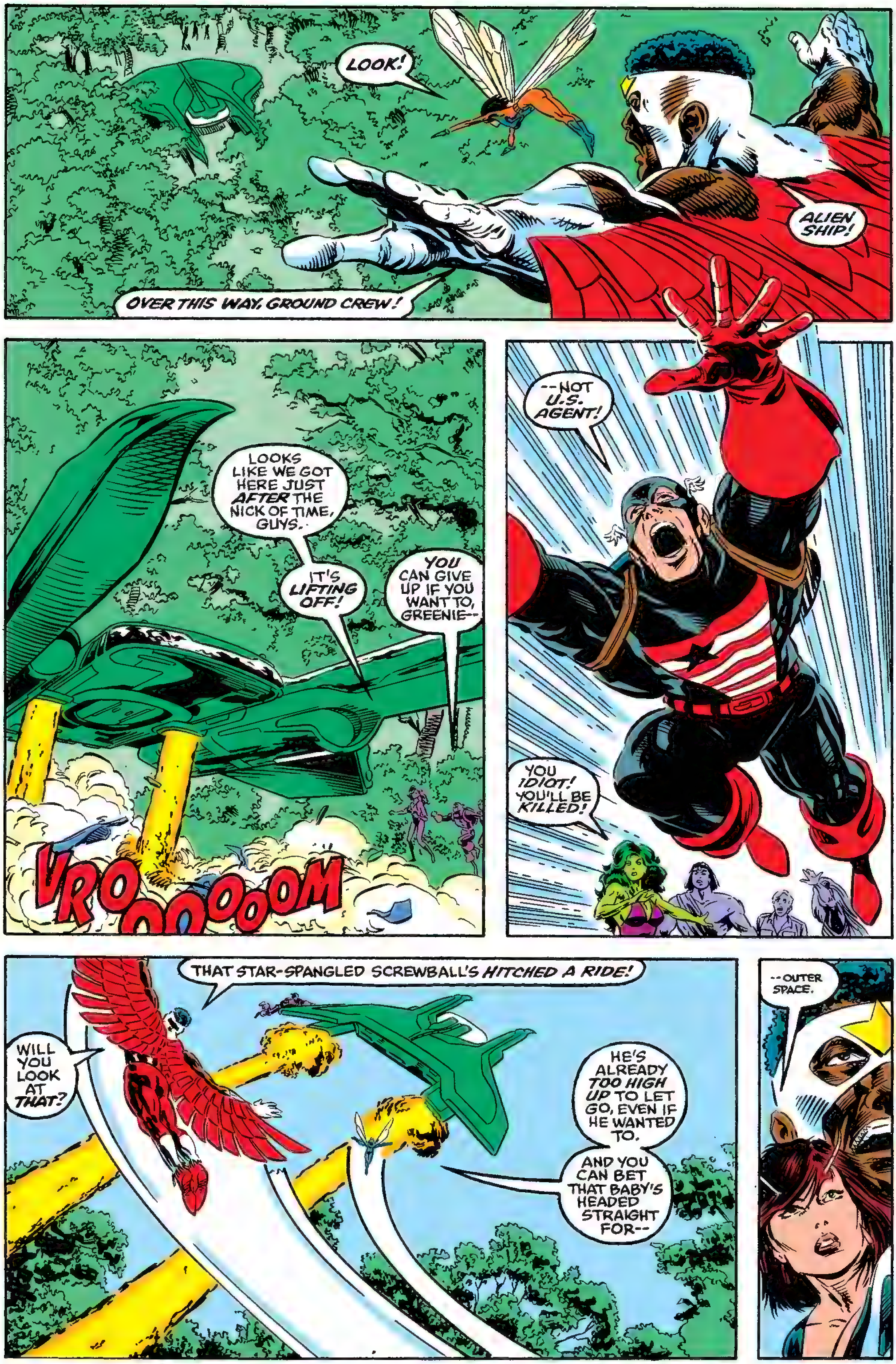

NOT NEARLY SO MUCH AS THIS WILL, ORGANIC BEING!
SLAMM
I'M-- MORE RESILIENT-- THAN YOU THINK, LITTLE MAN.
AND SINCE YOU SEEM TO BE THIS ENTITY'S BRAINS--
--MAYBE YOU'LL ALSO TURN OUT TO BE ITS WEAK LINK!
I MOST CERTAINLY WOULD BE...
...WERE IT NOT FOR MY POWER TO VIRTUALLY ELECTROCUTE ANY LIVING CREATURE I TOUCH!
ZZAKT
YAARRR--!
YOU DEFEATED THAT TERRAN JUST IN TIME, WARSTAR--
--FOR HERE COME HER COMRADES!
HIT 'EM HIGH, AVENGERS--
HIT 'EM LOW--

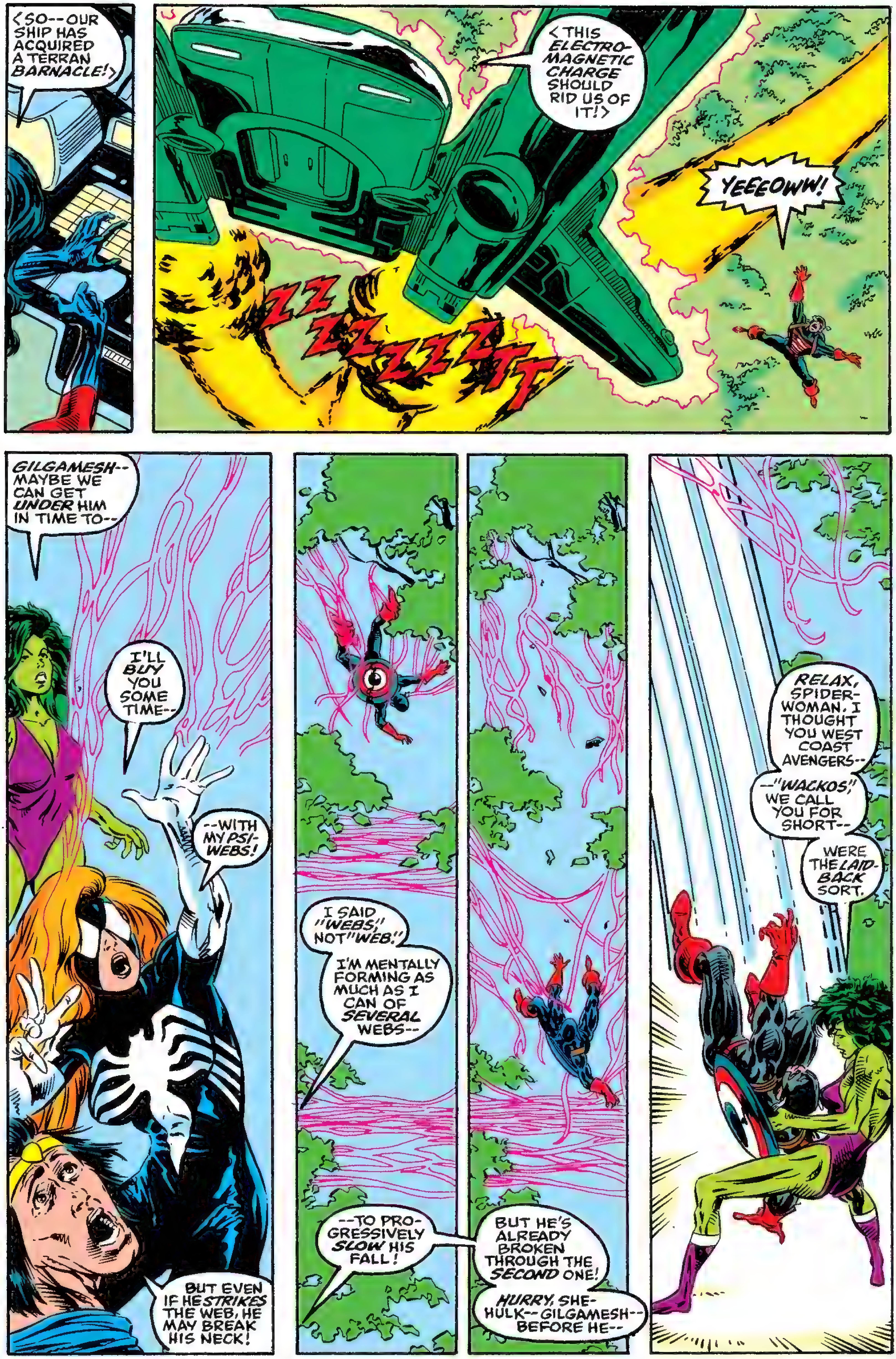

--AND HIT 'EM HARD!
SOK!
OH NO! AN ALIEN MY OWN SIZE!
DON'T TELL ME-- NOT ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE INEVITABLE MATCH-UPS!
DON'T YOU DARE CONSIDER YOURSELF MY EQUAL, TERRAN-- JUST BECAUSE WE ARE TEMPORARILY THE SAME SIZE!
JUST TELL ME YOU'RE NOT A CUT-RATE KREE...
BLASPHEMER! I AM A WARRIOR OF THE SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARD!
GREAT! 'CAUSE THE SHI'AR ARE NO STRONGER THAN US "TERRANS"!..
...SO AT LEAST I'VE GOT A SHOT!
NOT AGAINST SCINTILLA, FOOL!
FOR, BY A MENTAL COMMAND, I CAN INCREASE MY MASS AND WEIGHT TO WHAT IT IS WHEN I AM MY NORMAL HEIGHT--
--FAR MORE THAN YOUR PITIFUL WINGS CAN BEAR!
OH, AND BY THE WAY--
--I'M ALSO VERY GOOD ABOUT LANDING ON TOP!
JAN?
FALCON?
ANYBODY?
SOMEBODY TURN ON SOME LIGHTS IN HERE!
THEY ARE ON, TERRAN--
--EVERYWHERE EXCEPT IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF NIGHTSIDE!
THUNK
MMMFF--!
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, SHI'AR, GILGAMESH WAS ONCE BLINDED, IN ANTIQUITY--
--AND STILL MANAGED TO BRING RUIN DOWN UPON THE HEADS OF HIS ENEMIES.
LET-- ME-- GO!

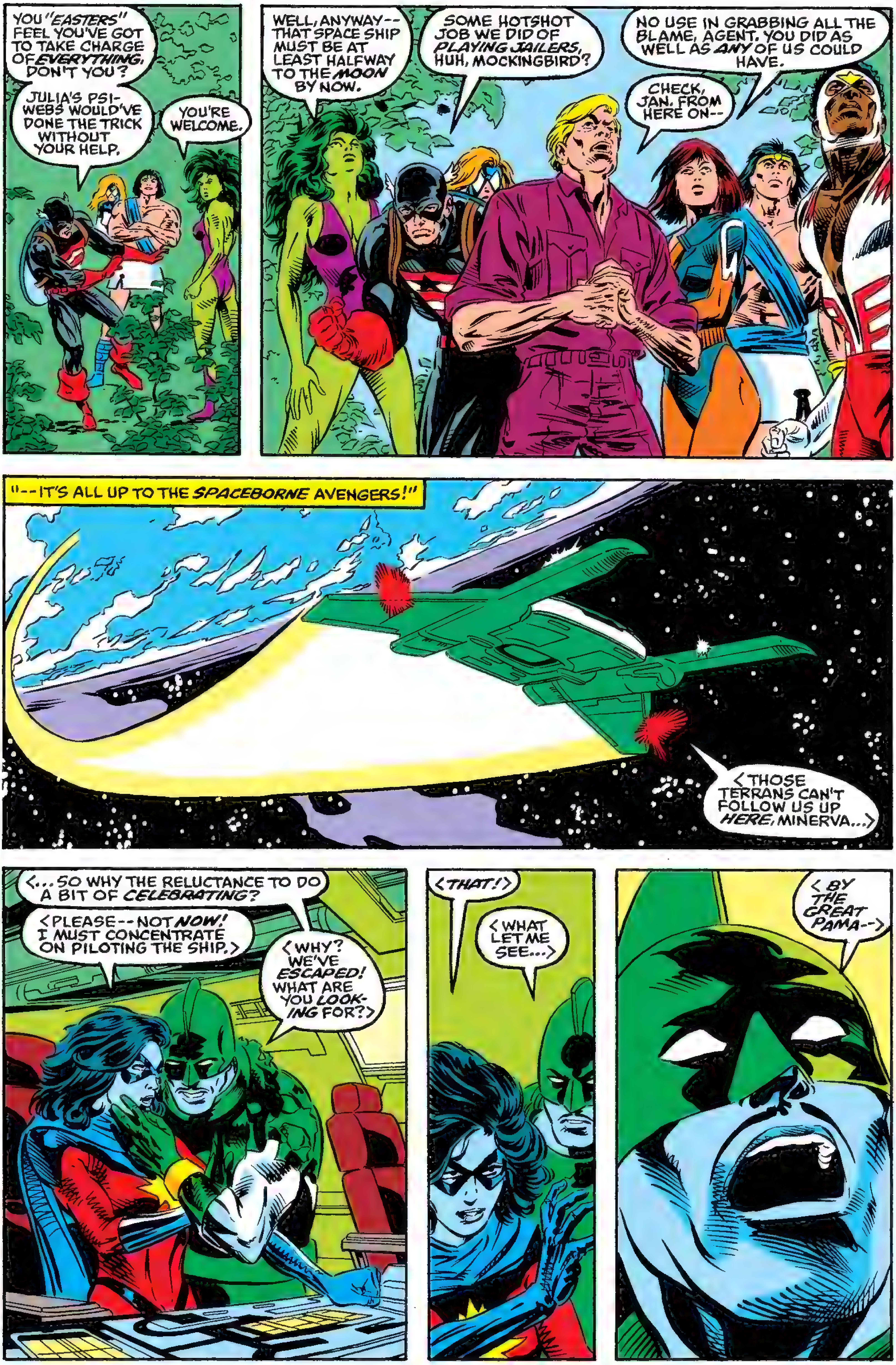

WHAMM
AAGGK--!
MY THANKS, WARSTAR. KILL THIS MORE-THAN-HUMAN BRUTE!
I WILL FIGHT ON, BEHEMOTH--
BTOK
--EVEN IF I MUST FIGHT ALL OF YOU ALONE!
BUT--YOU'RE NOT ALONE--GILGAMESH...
WE'RE A TEAM, REMEMBER?
A TEAM CALLED THE AVENGERS--ONE OF THE OLDEST, MOST RESPECTED NAMES IN HERODOM--
--A TEAM THAT'S GONNA CREAM THIS BUNCH OF OUTER-SPACE WEIRDOS!
MEANWHILE, IN A NEARBY CHAMBER...
HELLO, CAPTAIN ATLAS.
WELCOME BACK TO THE WORLD OF NORMAL PROPORTIONS.
WHO--?
DR. MINERVA!
YOUR FELLOW PRISONER IN MINIATURIZATION, UNTIL MOMENTS AGO.
BUT WHAT HAPPENED? I REMEMBER BEING SMASHED BY THAT TERRAN CALLED WONDER MAN*--THEN NOTHING.
AND--THOSE SOUNDS OF COMBAT NOT FAR AWAY--!?
SOME FOOL SHI'AR TRYING TO RESCUE THEIR KIND.
IT WAS A STRAY SHOT OF THEIRS THAT FREED AND ENLARGED US.
*WONDER MAN #7. --NEL
FZZT
WE MUST NOT JOIN THE FRAY--BUT RATHER, MAKE GOOD OUR ESCAPE, FOR THE SAKE OF THE KREE.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOUR BLASTER WAS STILL FUNCTIONING.
I'M JUST FULL OF SURPRISES TONIGHT.

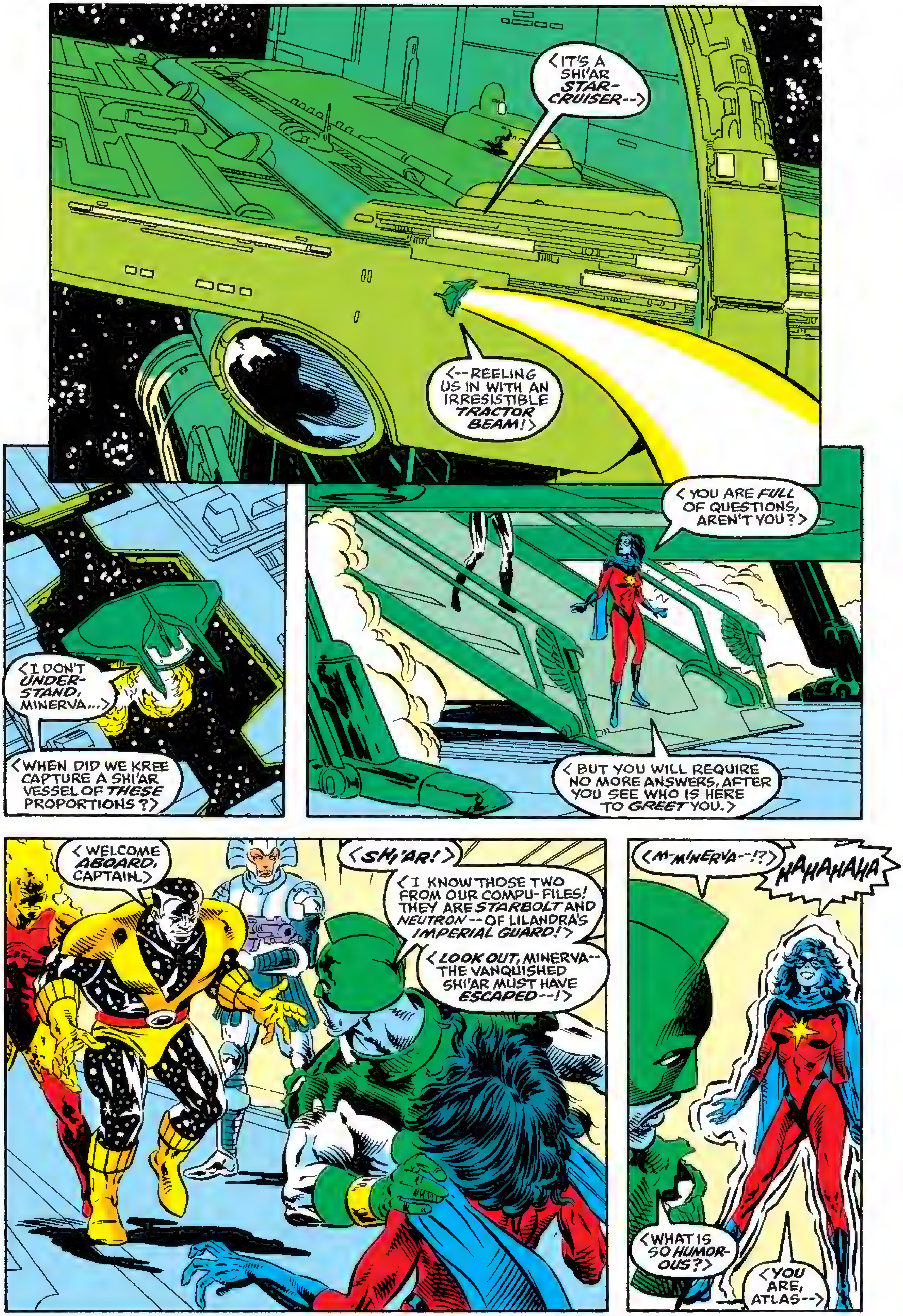

AS...
LASH OUT AT THE MAN-GOD, WARSTAR! MY POWERS OF DARKNESS WILL DISORIENT HIM, NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS...
NOT IF YOU DON'T GET A CHANCE TO USE THEM ON HIM!
YOU'RE TOO NEW AROUND HERE TO APPRECIATE IT...
...BUT I'M REALLY GETTING MUCH FASTER AT MAKING MY PSI-WEBS GOOD AND SOLID...
...SO I CAN REEL YOU IN LIKE A FISH!
NITEY-NIGHT, NIGHTSIDE.
Y'KNOW, THERE OUGHT TO BE A HIT SONG IN THERE SOMEWHERE.
SHE-HULK? HOW'RE YOU AND GILGAMESH COMING?
OH, ABOUT AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED, SPIDER-WOMAN.
KRAKKK
WE DECIDED TO SPLIT UP THE WARSTAR TEAM.
THE LAST OF THE SHI'AR ARE DOWN, AVENGERS. OUR VICTORY HERE IS COMPLETE.
UH--I'M NOT QUITE SO SURE OF THAT, GIL.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SHE-HULK?
THE KREE PRISONERS! DID ANYBODY GET A CHANCE TO CHECK UP ON THEM?
WELL... NOT... REALLY...!

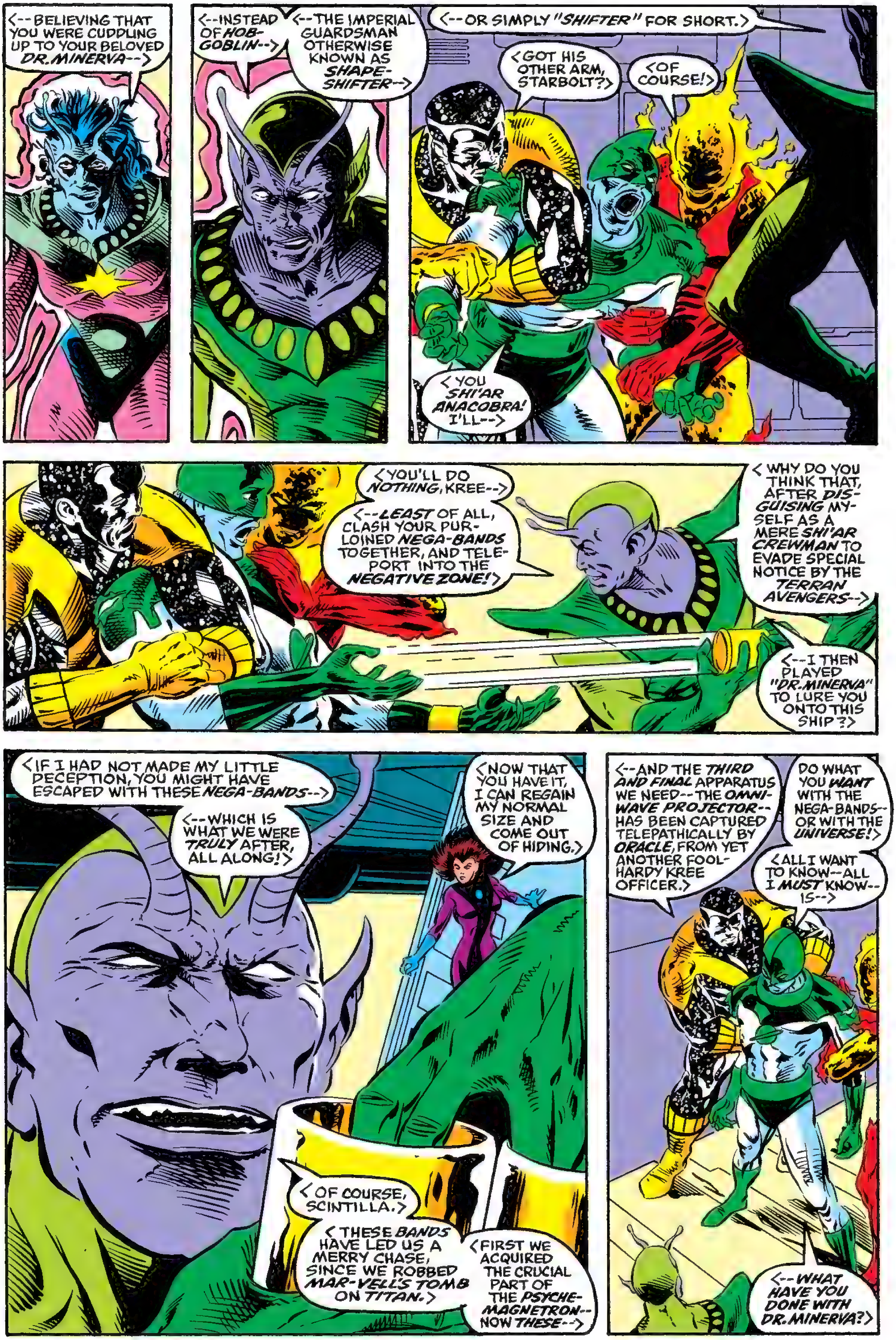

<YOU SAY YOU HAVE A *SHIP* HIDDEN IN THIS WOODED AREA, MINERVA?>
<YES...>
<...RIGHT HERE!>
<THIS IS A *SHI'AR* CRAFT!>
<BUT--HOW DID THEY--?>
<I LEARNED OUR FELLOW PRISONERS HAD SUMMONED IT, EVEN WHILE INCARCERATED.>
<STOP LOOKING A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH, AND GET ABOARD-- OR DO YOU *WANT* THE TERRANS TO CATCH UP WITH US?>
WELL! SO YOU TWO FINALLY DECIDED TO WAKE UP!
NOW *LOOK*, SHE-HULK...
JUST TELL HER TO *STUFF* IT, 'BIRD.
JEN WAS RIGHT. WHILE WE WERE FIGHTING THE SHI'AR BUNCH, OUR TWO RESIDENT *KREE* GOT FREE SOMEHOW--AND FLEW THE COOP.
WE'VE GOT TO *RECAPTURE* THEM!
THEN LET'S *MOVE OUT!*
MOCKINGBIRD--YOU STAY HERE.
WHY? BECAUSE I CAN'T *PRESS* SEVERAL TONS?
BE FAIR. IN ONE SENSE, WE ARE *ALL* HOLDING THE FORT--JUST BY REMAINING ON EARTH.
GILGAMESH WAS RIGHT. WHO AM I TO PLAY PRIMA DONNA?
I JUST WISH--
OHHH
YOU--!?

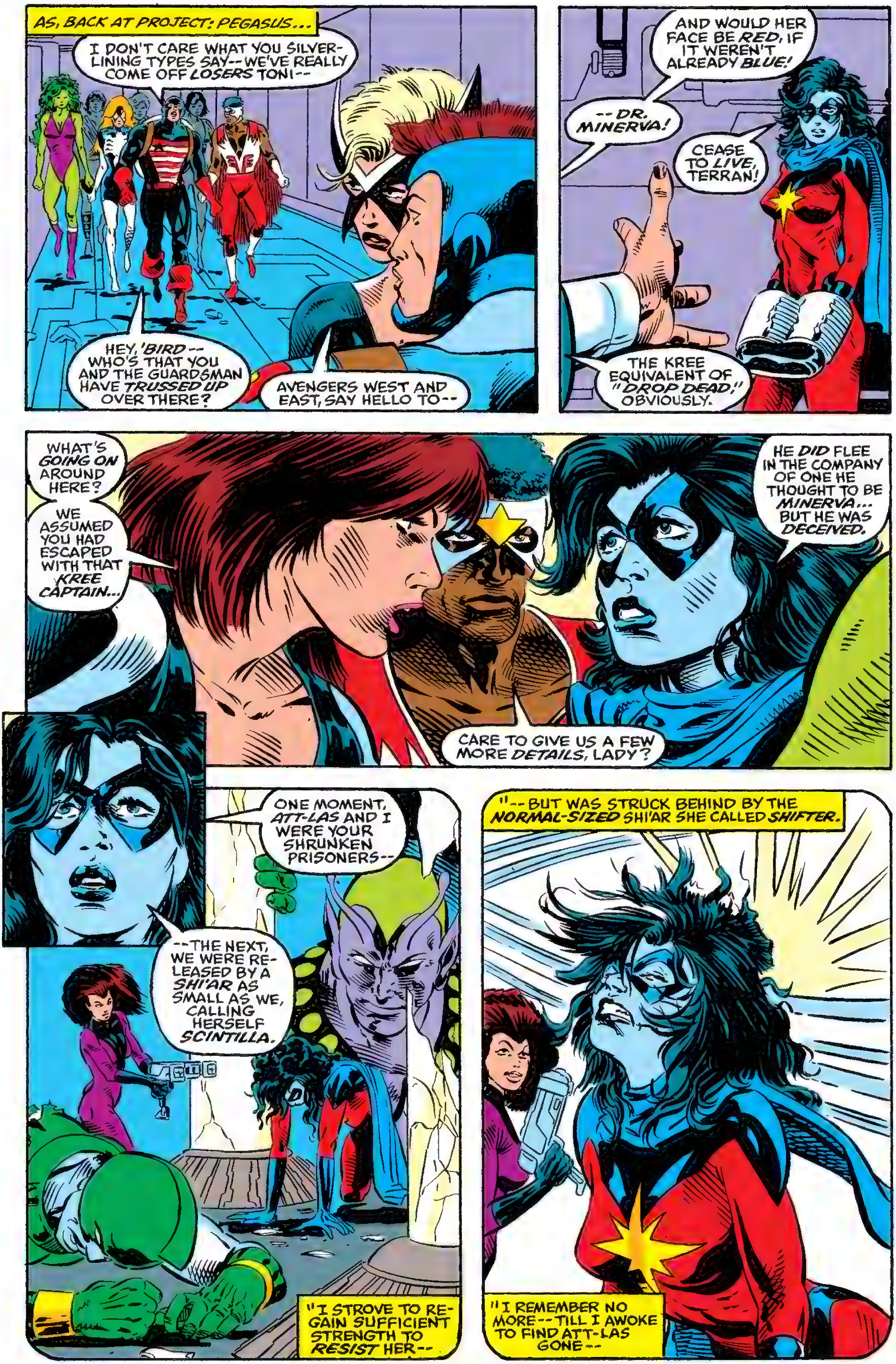

LOOK!
ALIEN SHIP!
OVER THIS WAY, GROUND CREW!
LOOKS LIKE WE GOT HERE JUST *AFTER* THE NICK OF TIME, GUYS.
IT'S *LIFTING OFF!*
YOU CAN GIVE UP IF YOU WANT TO, GREENIE--
VROOOOOOOM
--NOT *U.S. AGENT!*
YOU *IDIOT!* YOU'LL BE *KILLED!*
THAT STAR-SPANGLED SCREWBALL'S *HITCHED A RIDE!*
WILL YOU LOOK AT *THAT?*
HE'S ALREADY *TOO HIGH UP* TO LET GO, EVEN IF HE WANTED TO.
AND YOU CAN BET THAT BABY'S HEADED STRAIGHT FOR--
--OUTER SPACE.

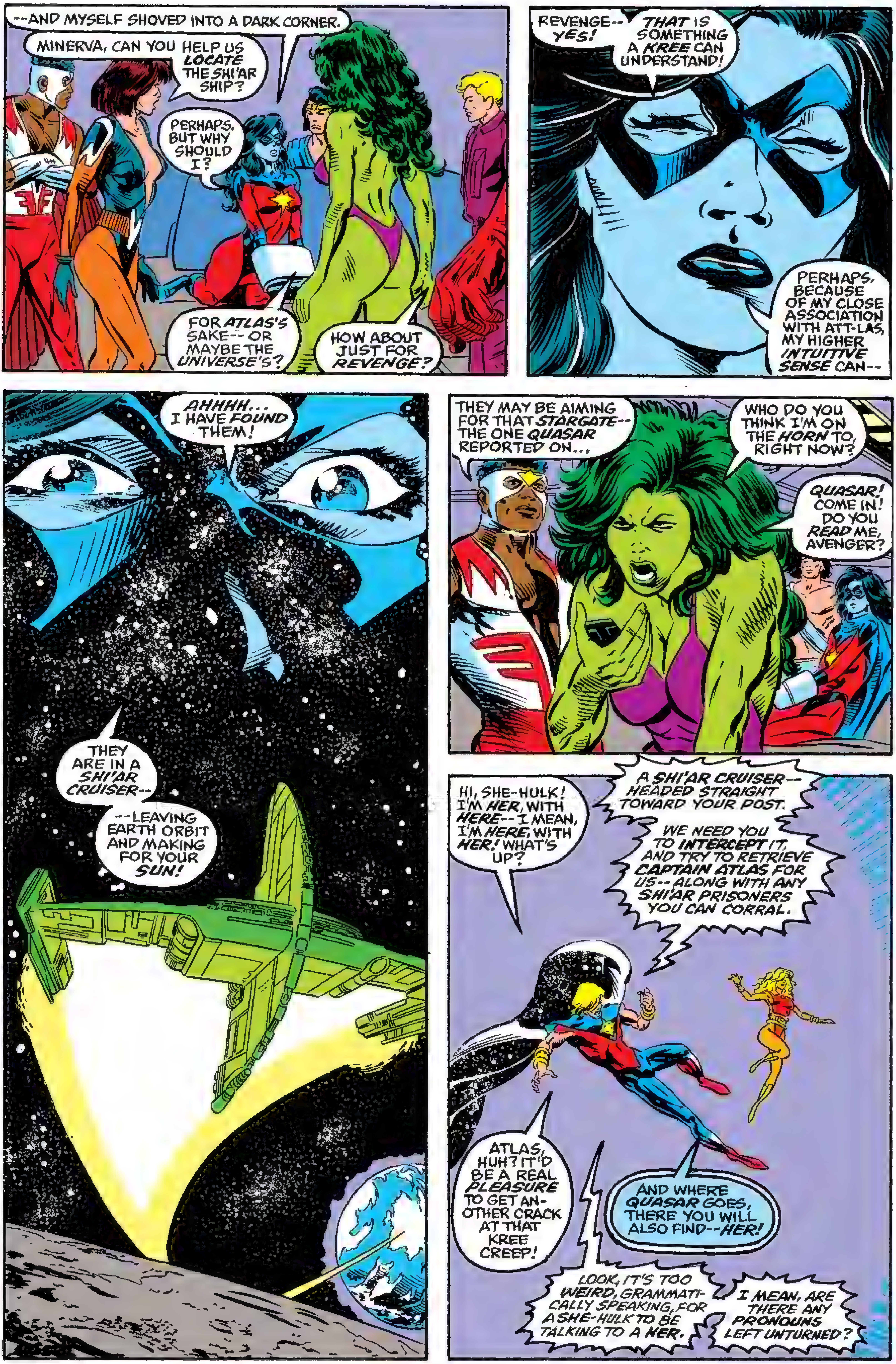

<SO--OUR SHIP HAS ACQUIRED A TERRAN *BARNACLE!*>
<THIS *ELECTRO-MAGNETIC CHARGE* SHOULD RID US OF IT!>
ZZZZZZZTT
YEEEOWW!
GILGAMESH--MAYBE WE CAN GET *UNDER* HIM IN TIME TO--
I'LL *BUY* YOU SOME TIME--
--WITH MY *PSI-WEBS!*
BUT EVEN IF HE *STRIKES* THE WEB, HE MAY BREAK HIS NECK!
I SAID "*WEBS*," NOT "*WEB*."
I'M MENTALLY FORMING AS MUCH AS I CAN OF *SEVERAL* WEBS--
--TO PROGRESSIVELY *SLOW* HIS FALL!
BUT HE'S ALREADY BROKEN THROUGH THE *SECOND* ONE!
HURRY, SHE-HULK--GILGAMESH--BEFORE HE--
RELAX, SPIDER-WOMAN. I THOUGHT YOU WEST COAST AVENGERS--
--"*WACKOS*," WE CALL YOU FOR SHORT--
WERE THE *LAID-BACK* SORT.

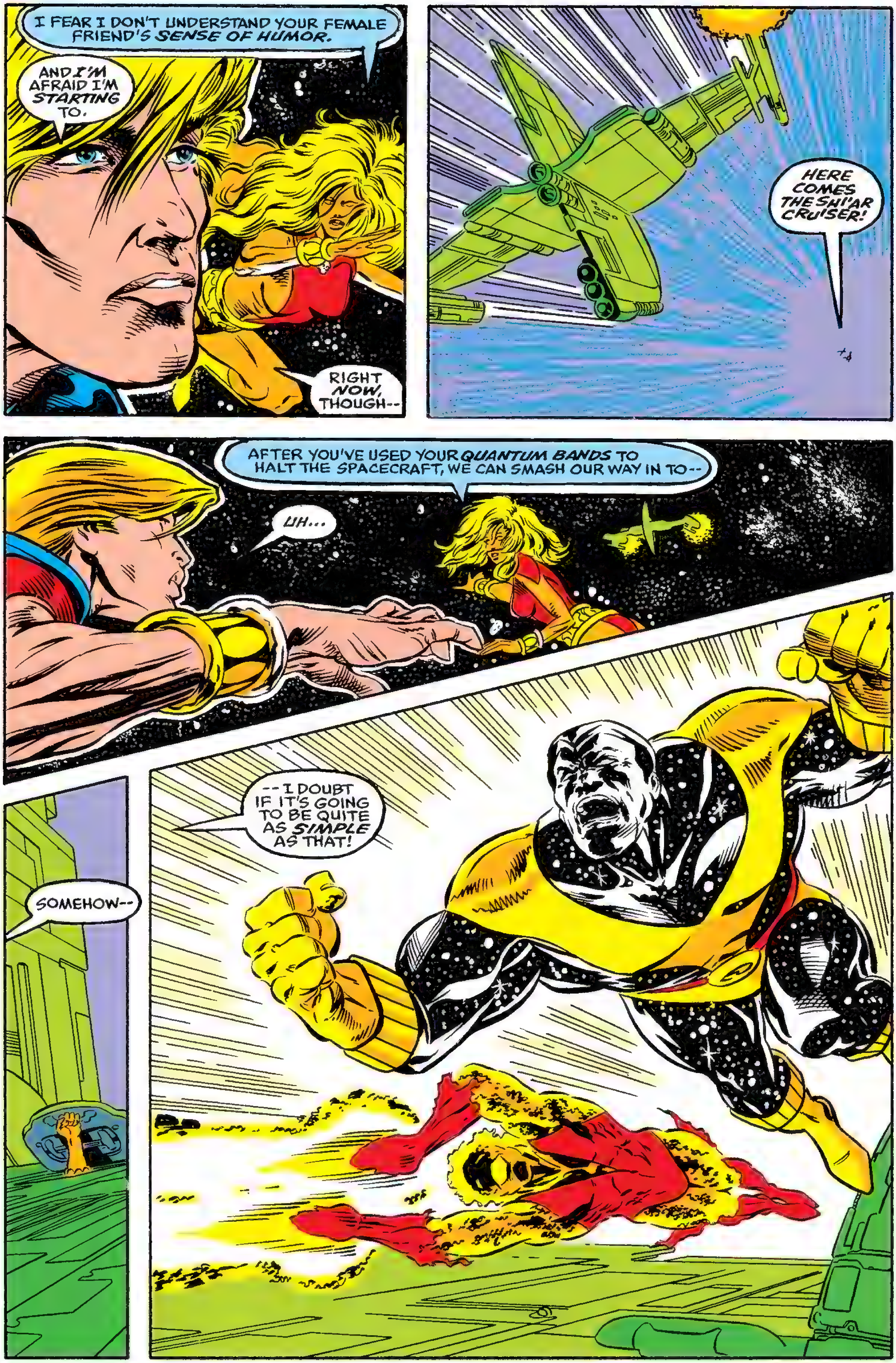

YOU "EASTERS" FEEL YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE CHARGE OF *EVERYTHING*, DON'T YOU?
JULIA'S PSI-WEBS WOULD'VE DONE THE TRICK WITHOUT YOUR HELP.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
WELL, ANYWAY--THAT SPACE SHIP MUST BE AT LEAST HALFWAY TO THE *MOON* BY NOW.
SOME HOTSHOT JOB WE DID OF *PLAYING JAILERS*, HUH, MOCKINGBIRD?
NO USE IN GRABBING ALL THE BLAME, AGENT. YOU DID AS WELL AS *ANY* OF US COULD HAVE.
CHECK, JAN. FROM HERE ON--
"--IT'S ALL UP TO THE *SPACEBORNE* AVENGERS!"
<THOSE TERRANS CAN'T FOLLOW US UP *HERE*, MINERVA...>
<...SO WHY THE RELUCTANCE TO DO A BIT OF *CELEBRATING*?
<PLEASE--NOT *NOW*! I MUST CONCENTRATE ON PILOTING THE SHIP.>
<WHY? WE'VE *ESCAPED*! WHAT ARE YOU *LOOKING* FOR?>
<*THAT!*>
<WHAT LET ME SEE...>
<*BY THE GREAT PAMA*-->

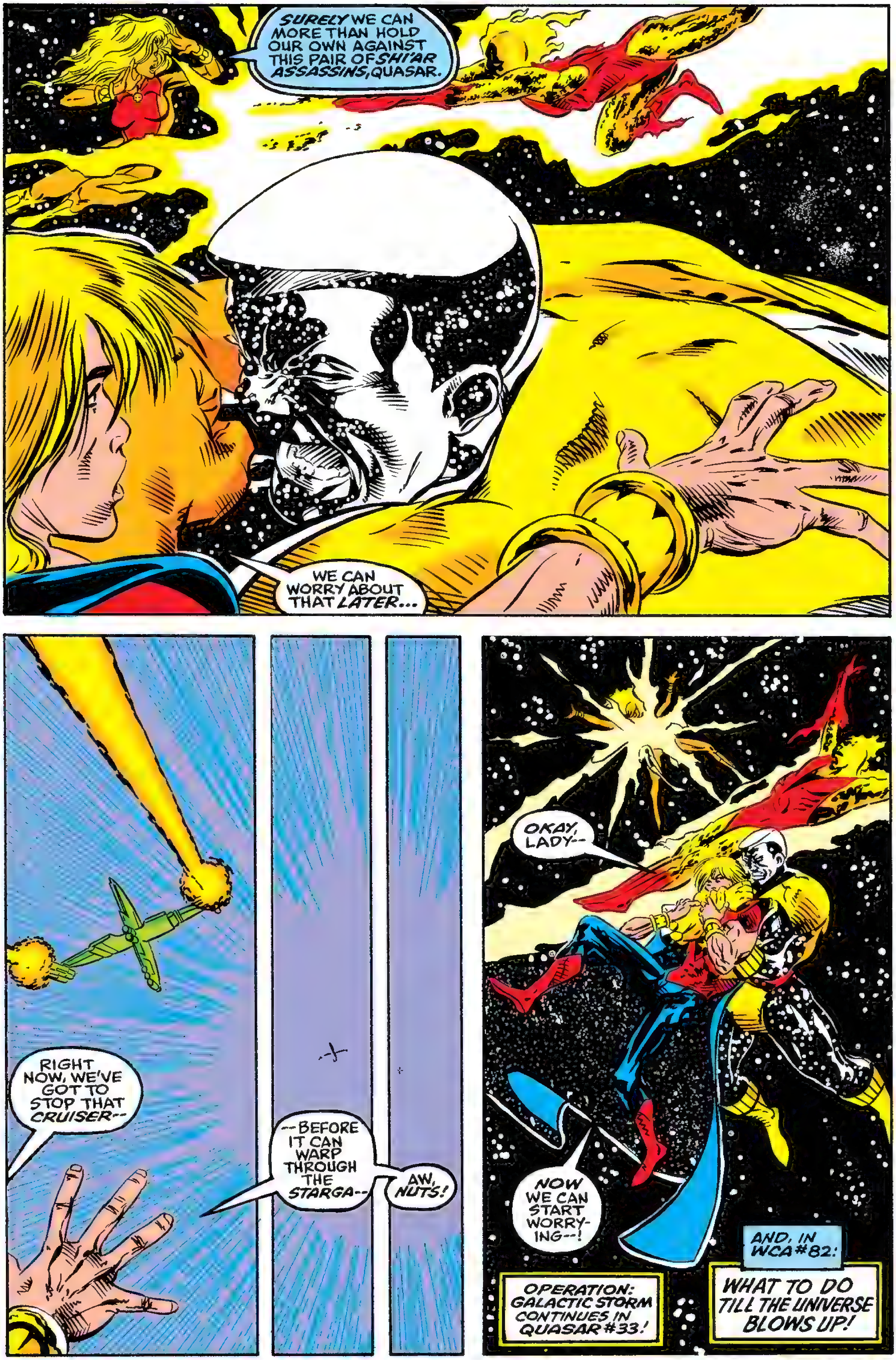

<IT'S A SHI'AR *STAR-CRUISER*-->
<--REELING US IN WITH AN IRRESISTIBLE *TRACTOR BEAM!*>
<I DON'T *UNDER-STAND,* MINERVA...>
<WHEN DID WE KREE CAPTURE A SHI'AR VESSEL OF *THESE* PROPORTIONS?>
<YOU ARE *FULL* OF QUESTIONS, AREN'T YOU?>
<BUT YOU WILL REQUIRE NO MORE ANSWERS, AFTER YOU SEE WHO IS HERE TO *GREET* YOU.>
<WELCOME *ABOARD,* CAPTAIN.>
<*SHI'AR!*>
<I KNOW THOSE TWO FROM OUR COMPU-FILES! THEY ARE *STARBOLT* AND *NEUTRON* --OF LILANDRA'S *IMPERIAL GUARD!*>
<*LOOK OUT,* MINERVA--THE VANQUISHED SHI'AR MUST HAVE *ESCAPED*--!>
<M-MINERVA--!?>
HAHAHAHAHA
<WHAT IS SO HUMOR-OUS?>
<YOU ARE, ATLAS-->


<--BELIEVING THAT YOU WERE CUDDLING UP TO YOUR BELOVED DR. MINERVA-->
<--INSTEAD OF HOB-GOBLIN-->
<--THE IMPERIAL GUARDSMAN OTHERWISE KNOWN AS SHAPE-SHIFTER-->
<--OR SIMPLY "SHIFTER" FOR SHORT.>
<GOT HIS OTHER ARM, STARBOLT?>
<OF COURSE!>
<YOU SHI'AR ANACOBRA! I'LL-->
<YOU'LL DO NOTHING, KREE-->
<--LEAST OF ALL, CLASH YOUR PURLOINED NEGA-BANDS TOGETHER, AND TELEPORT INTO THE NEGATIVE ZONE!>
<WHY DO YOU THINK THAT, AFTER DISGUISING MYSELF AS A MERE SHI'AR CREWMAN TO EVADE SPECIAL NOTICE BY THE TERRAN AVENGERS-->
<--I THEN PLAYED "DR. MINERVA" TO LURE YOU ONTO THIS SHIP?>
<IF I HAD NOT MADE MY LITTLE DECEPTION, YOU MIGHT HAVE ESCAPED WITH THESE NEGA-BANDS-->
<--WHICH IS WHAT WE WERE TRULY AFTER, ALL ALONG!>
<NOW THAT YOU HAVE IT, I CAN REGAIN MY NORMAL SIZE AND COME OUT OF HIDING.>
<OF COURSE, SCINTILLA.>
<THESE BANDS HAVE LED US A MERRY CHASE, SINCE WE ROBBED MAR-VELL'S TOMB ON TITAN.>
<FIRST WE ACQUIRED THE CRUCIAL PART OF THE PSYCHE-MAGNETRON--NOW THESE-->
<--AND THE THIRD AND FINAL APPARATUS WE NEED--THE OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR--HAS BEEN CAPTURED TELEPATHICALLY BY ORACLE, FROM YET ANOTHER FOOL-HARDY KREE OFFICER.>
DO WHAT YOU WANT WITH THE NEGA-BANDS--OR WITH THE UNIVERSE!>
<ALL I WANT TO KNOW--ALL I MUST KNOW--IS-->
<--WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH DR. MINERVA?>


AS, BACK AT PROJECT: PEGASUS...
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SILVER-LINING TYPES SAY--WE'VE REALLY COME OFF *LOSERS* TONI--
HEY, *'BIRD*--WHO'S THAT YOU AND THE GUARDSMAN HAVE *TRUSSED UP* OVER THERE?
AVENGERS WEST AND EAST, SAY HELLO TO--
--DR. MINERVA!
AND WOULD HER FACE BE *RED*, IF IT WEREN'T ALREADY *BLUE!*
CEASE TO *LIVE*, TERRAN!
THE KREE EQUIVALENT OF *"DROP DEAD,"* OBVIOUSLY.
WHAT'S *GOING ON* AROUND HERE?
WE ASSUMED YOU HAD ESCAPED WITH THAT *KREE CAPTAIN...*
HE *DID* FLEE IN THE COMPANY OF ONE HE THOUGHT TO BE *MINERVA...* BUT HE WAS *DECEIVED.*
CARE TO GIVE US A FEW MORE *DETAILS*, LADY?
ONE MOMENT, *ATT-LAS* AND I WERE YOUR SHRUNKEN PRISONERS--
--THE NEXT, WE WERE RELEASED BY A *SHI'AR* AS SMALL AS WE, CALLING HERSELF *SCINTILLA.*
"I STROVE TO REGAIN SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO *RESIST* HER--
"--BUT WAS STRUCK BEHIND BY THE *NORMAL-SIZED* SHI'AR SHE CALLED *SHIFTER.*
"I REMEMBER NO MORE--TILL I AWOKE TO FIND ATT-LAS GONE--


--AND MYSELF SHOVED INTO A DARK CORNER.
MINERVA, CAN YOU HELP US *LOCATE* THE SHI'AR SHIP?
PERHAPS. BUT WHY SHOULD I?
FOR *ATLAS'S* SAKE-- OR MAYBE THE *UNIVERSE'S*?
HOW ABOUT JUST FOR *REVENGE?*
REVENGE-- *YES!*
THAT IS SOMETHING A *KREE* CAN UNDERSTAND!
PERHAPS, BECAUSE OF MY CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH ATT-LAS, MY HIGHER *INTUITIVE SENSE* CAN--
AHHHH... I HAVE *FOUND* THEM!
THEY ARE IN A *SHI'AR CRUISER*--
--LEAVING EARTH ORBIT AND MAKING FOR YOUR *SUN!*
THEY MAY BE AIMING FOR THAT *STARGATE*-- THE ONE *QUASAR* REPORTED ON...
WHO DO YOU THINK I'M ON THE *HORN* TO, RIGHT NOW?
QUASAR! COME IN! DO YOU *READ* ME, AVENGER?
HI, SHE-HULK! I'M *HER*, WITH *HERE*-- I MEAN, I'M *HERE*, WITH *HER!* WHAT'S UP?
A SHI'AR CRUISER-- HEADED STRAIGHT TOWARD YOUR POST.
WE NEED YOU TO *INTERCEPT* IT, AND TRY TO RETRIEVE *CAPTAIN ATLAS* FOR US-- ALONG WITH ANY SHI'AR PRISONERS YOU CAN CORRAL.
ATLAS, HUH? IT'D BE A REAL *PLEASURE* TO GET ANOTHER CRACK AT THAT KREE CREEP!
AND WHERE *QUASAR* GOES, THERE YOU WILL ALSO FIND-- *HER!*
LOOK, IT'S TOO WEIRD, GRAMMATICALLY SPEAKING, FOR A SHE-HULK TO BE TALKING TO A *HER*.
I MEAN, ARE THERE ANY *PRONOUNS* LEFT UNTURNED?


I FEAR I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR FEMALE FRIEND'S *SENSE OF HUMOR.*
AND *I'M* AFRAID I'M *STARTING* TO.
RIGHT *NOW,* THOUGH--
HERE COMES THE SHI'AR CRUISER!
AFTER YOU'VE USED YOUR *QUANTUM BANDS* TO HALT THE SPACECRAFT, WE CAN SMASH OUR WAY IN TO--
UH...
SOMEHOW--
--I DOUBT IF IT'S GOING TO BE QUITE AS *SIMPLE* AS THAT!


SURELY WE CAN MORE THAN HOLD OUR OWN AGAINST THIS PAIR OF SHI'AR ASSASSINS, QUASAR.
WE CAN WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER...
RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT TO STOP THAT CRUISER--
--BEFORE IT CAN WARP THROUGH THE STARGA--
AW, NUTS!
OKAY, LADY--
NOW WE CAN START WORRYING--!
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM CONTINUES IN QUASAR #33!
AND, IN WCA #82:
WHAT TO DO TILL THE UNIVERSE BLOWS UP!

OPERATION:
GALACTIC STORM
THE KREE-SHI'AR WAR
EARTH'S LAST HOPE IS WITH HER MIGHTIEST HEROES.
STEWART CINECO PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH MICHAEL Z. HOBSON & THOMAS DeFALCO PRODUCTION
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM STARRING AVENGERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THOR, QUASAR, IRON MAN, WONDER MAN, AVENGERS WEST COAST
WRITTEN BY TOM DeFALCO, MARK GRUENWALD, BOB HARRAS, GERARD JONES, LEN KAMINSKI, ROY THOMAS
PENCILS BY GREG CAPULLO, STEVE EPTING, RON FRENZ, JEFF JOHNSON, RICK LEVINS, DAVE ROSS, PAUL RYAN
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PROMOTIONAL COPY BY TAMMY BROWN DESIGN DIRECTION BY MARIANO NICIEZA TITLE DESIGNS BY KEN LOPEZ PROMOTIONAL PAINTING BY THOMAS TONKIN
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OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 10
QUASAR
BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

PART 10

QUASAR

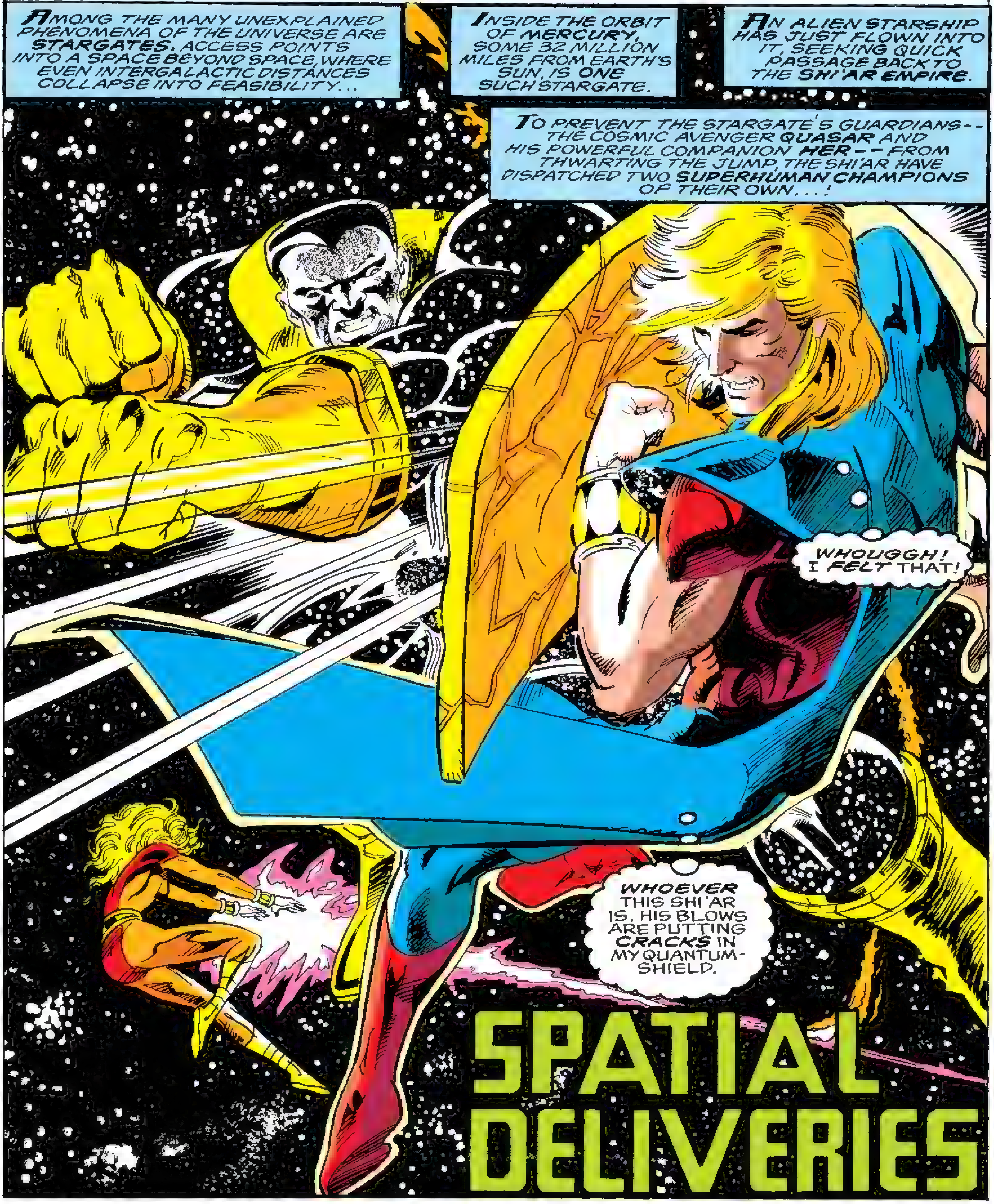
TWO INTERGALACTIC EMPIRES — THE MILITARISTIC **KREE** AND THE MATRIARCHAL **SHI'AR** — ARE AT WAR, AND EARTH'S SUN IS THE LOCUS OF THEIR GALAXY-SPANNING ONSLAUGHT. WHILE TWO ENVOYS OF AVENGERS HEAD TOWARDS THE CAPITALS OF EACH EMPIRE, IT'S UP TO THE **QUANTUM CRUSADER** TO BE EARTH'S TROUBLESHOOTER. . .

AMONG THE MANY UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENA OF THE UNIVERSE ARE **STARGATES**, ACCESS POINTS INTO A SPACE BEYOND SPACE, WHERE EVEN INTERGALACTIC DISTANCES COLLAPSE INTO FEASIBILITY...

INSIDE THE ORBIT OF **MERCURY**, SOME 32 MILLION MILES FROM EARTH'S SUN, IS **ONE** SUCH STARGATE.

AN ALIEN STARSHIP HAS JUST FLOWN INTO IT, SEEKING QUICK PASSAGE BACK TO THE **SHI'AR EMPIRE**.

TO PREVENT THE STARGATE'S GUARDIANS -- THE COSMIC AVENGER **QUASAR** AND HIS POWERFUL COMPANION **HER** -- FROM THWARTING THE JUMP, THE SHI'AR HAVE DISPATCHED TWO **SUPERHUMAN CHAMPIONS** OF THEIR OWN. . . !


WHOUGGH! I *FELT* THAT!
WHOEVER THIS SHI'AR IS, HIS BLOWS ARE PUTTING *CRACKS* IN MY QUANTUM-SHIELD.

SPATIAL DELIVERIES

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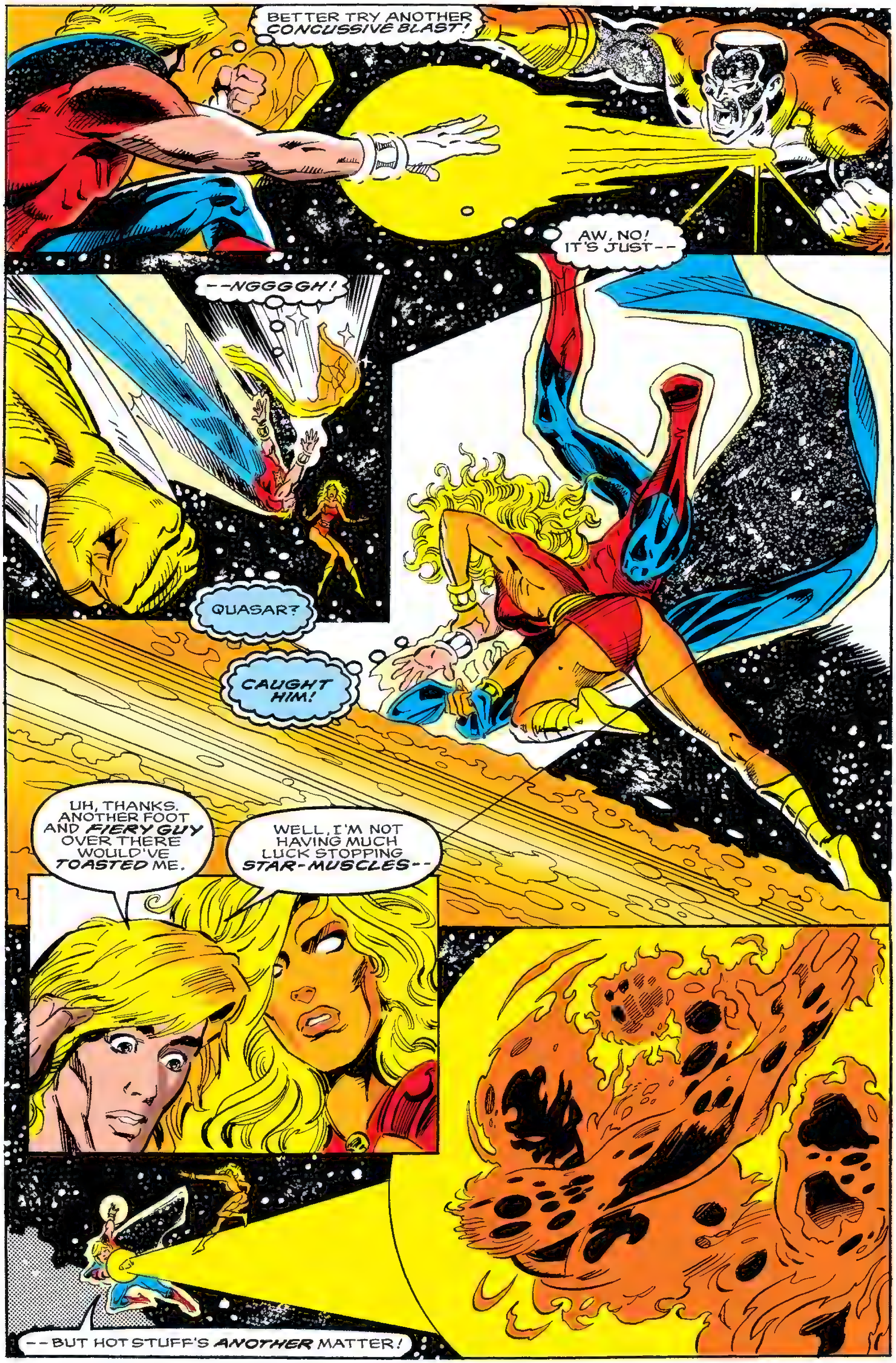
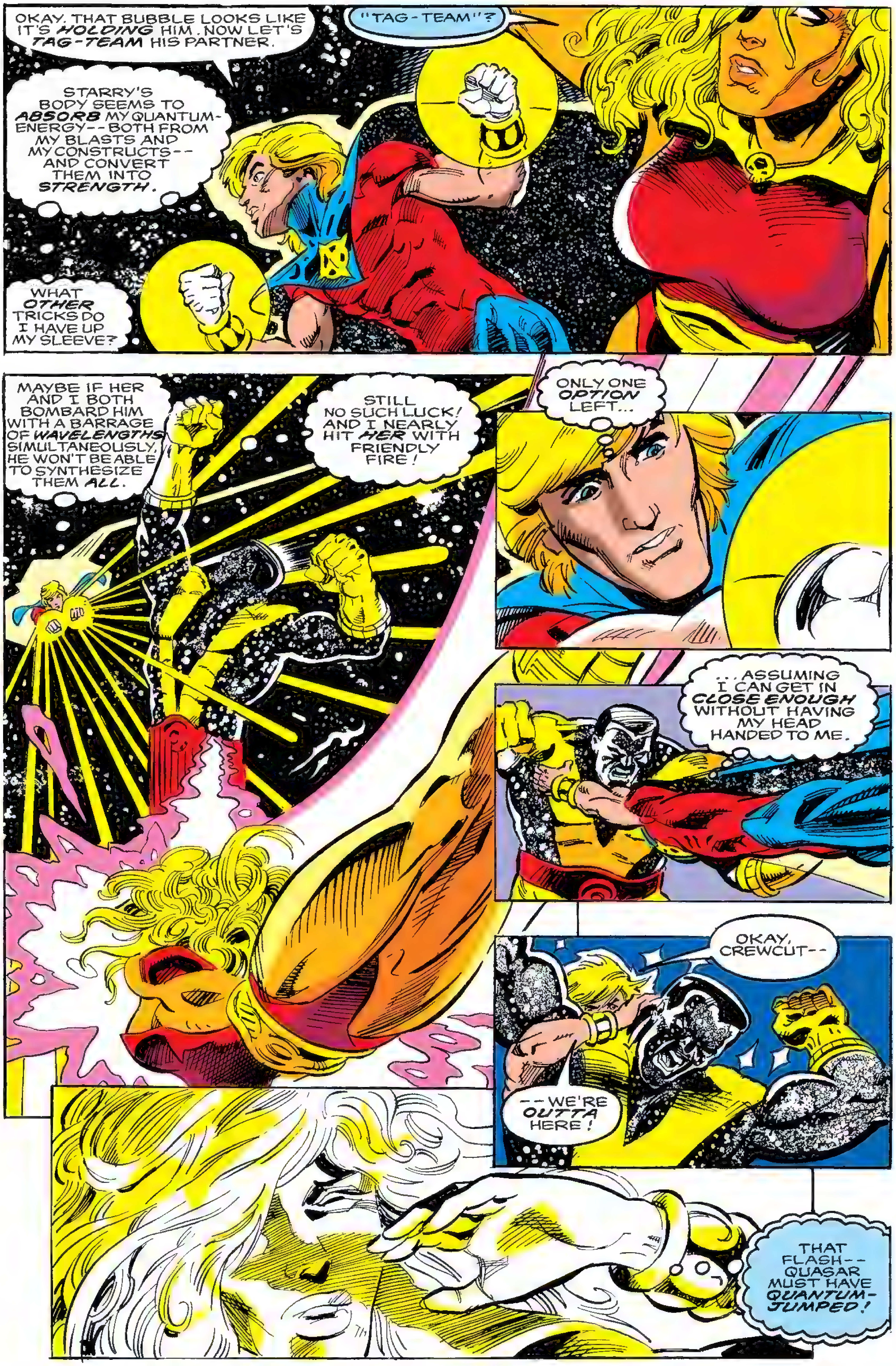
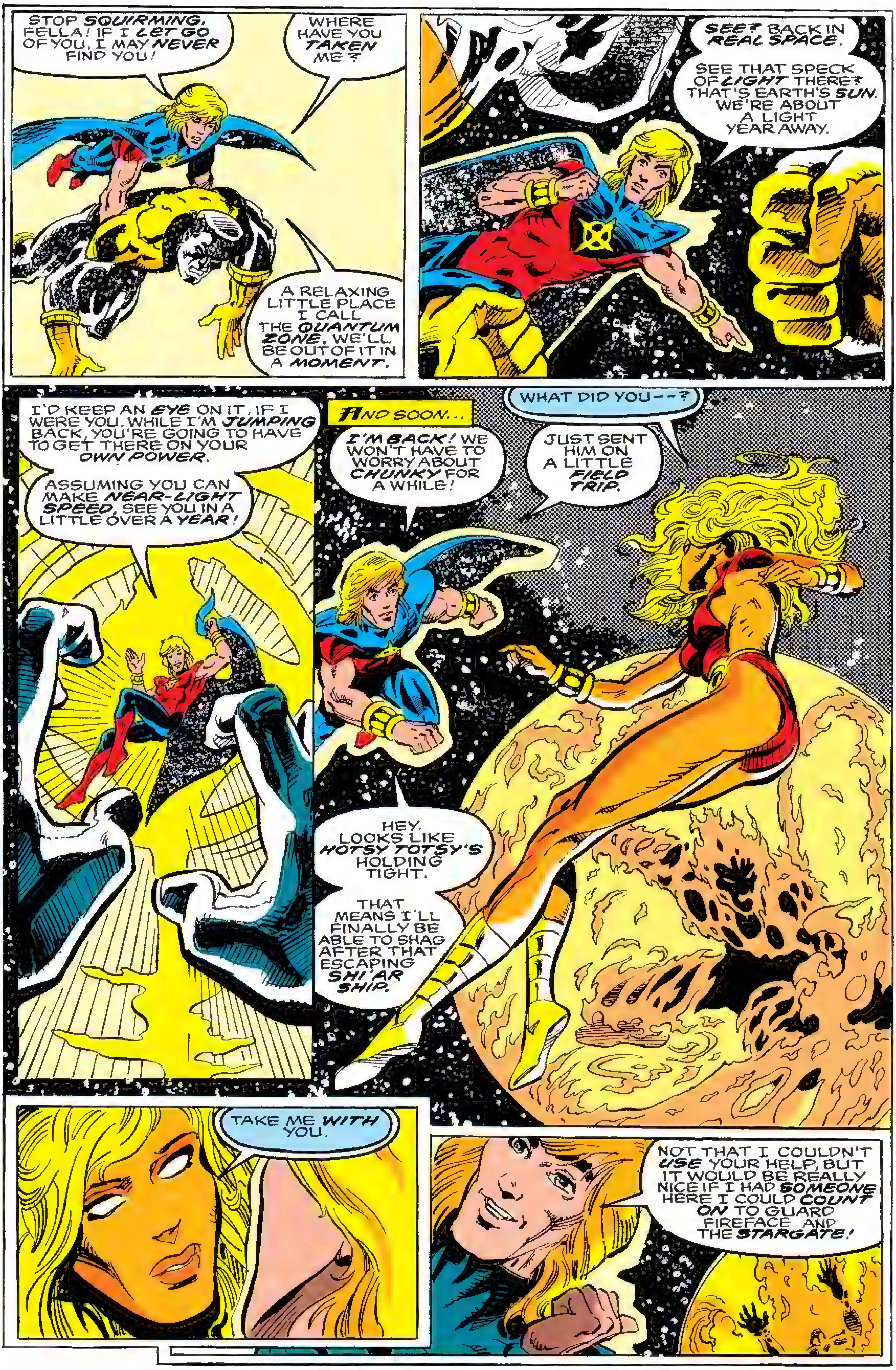
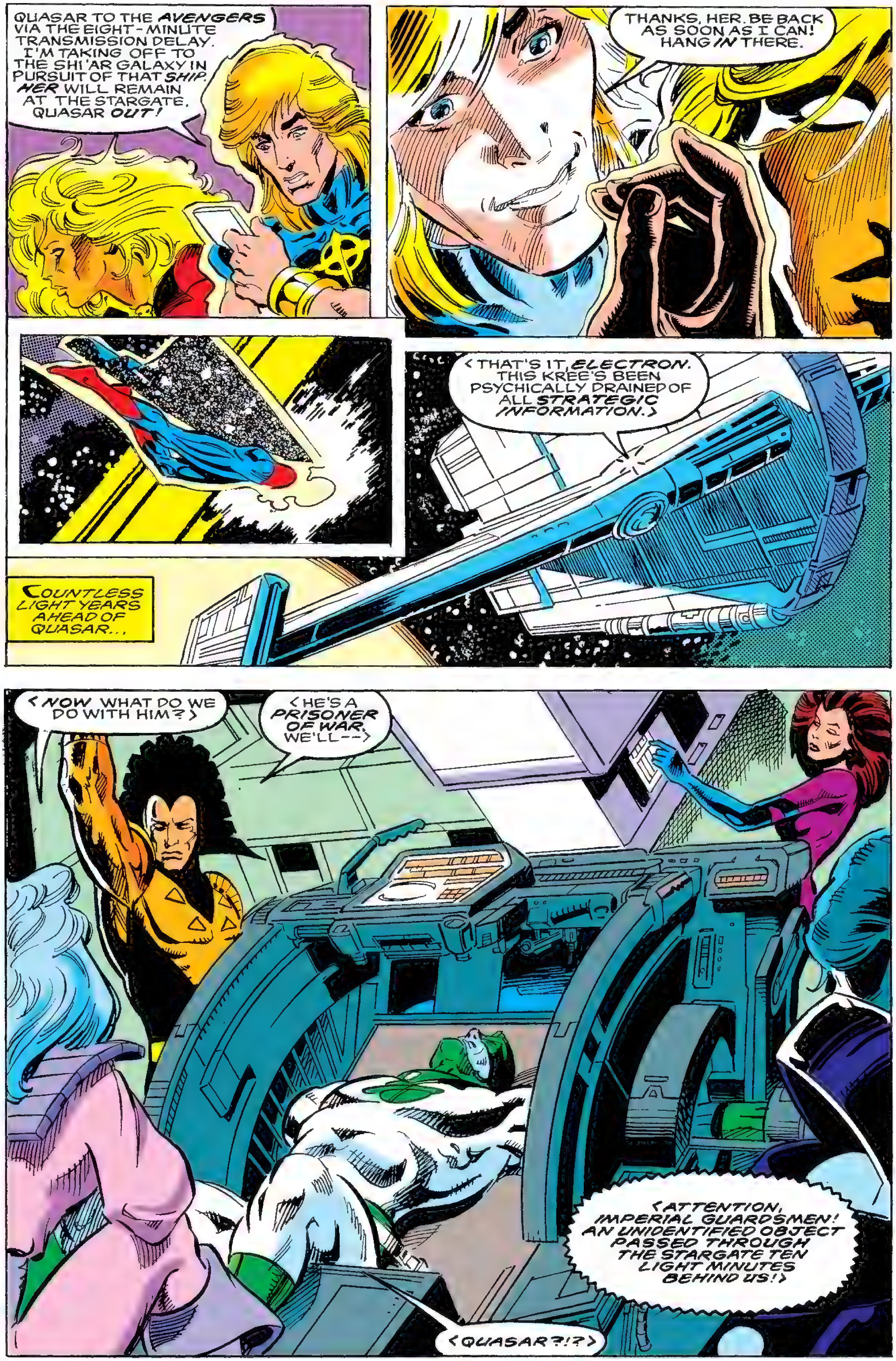
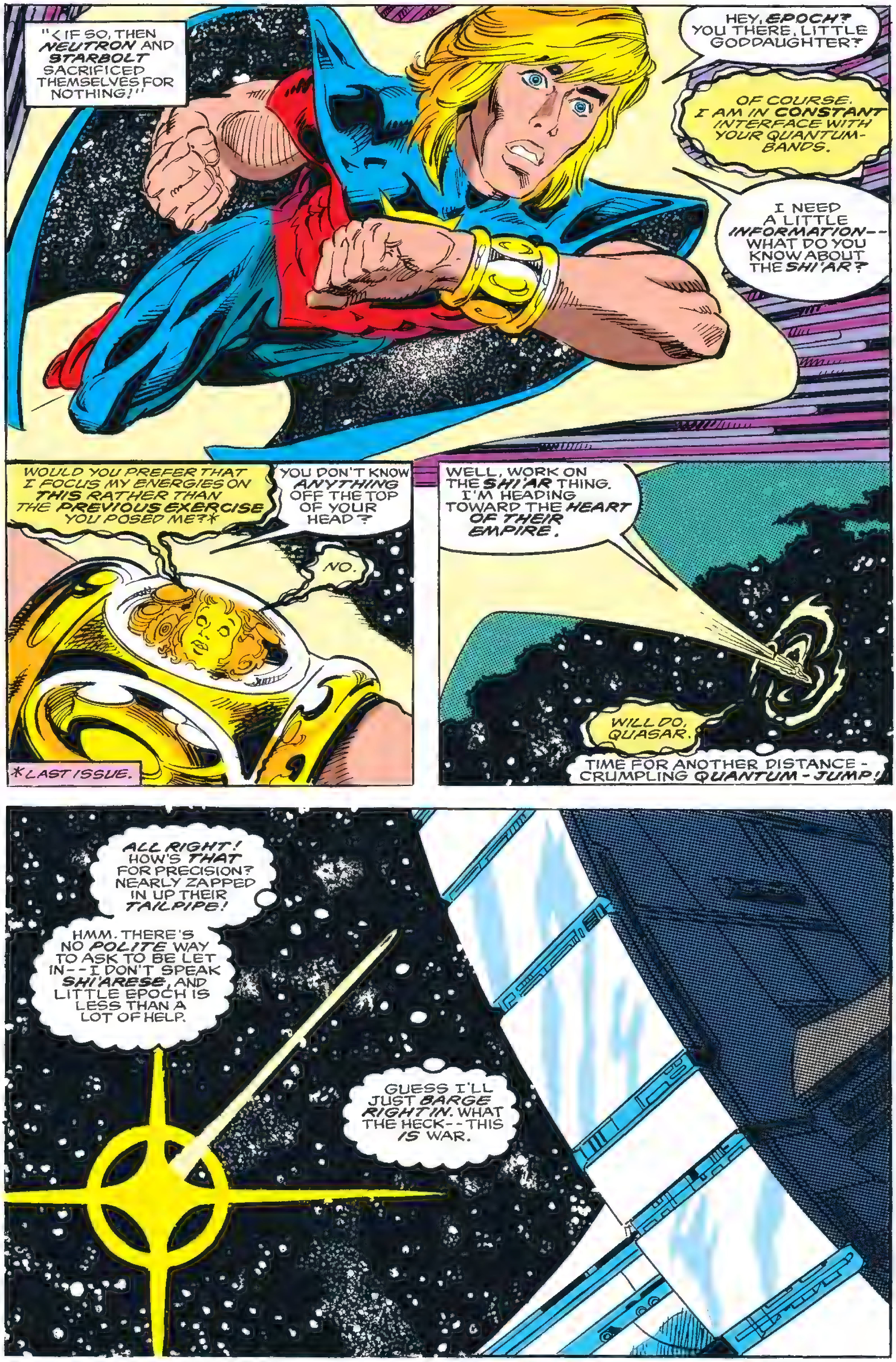
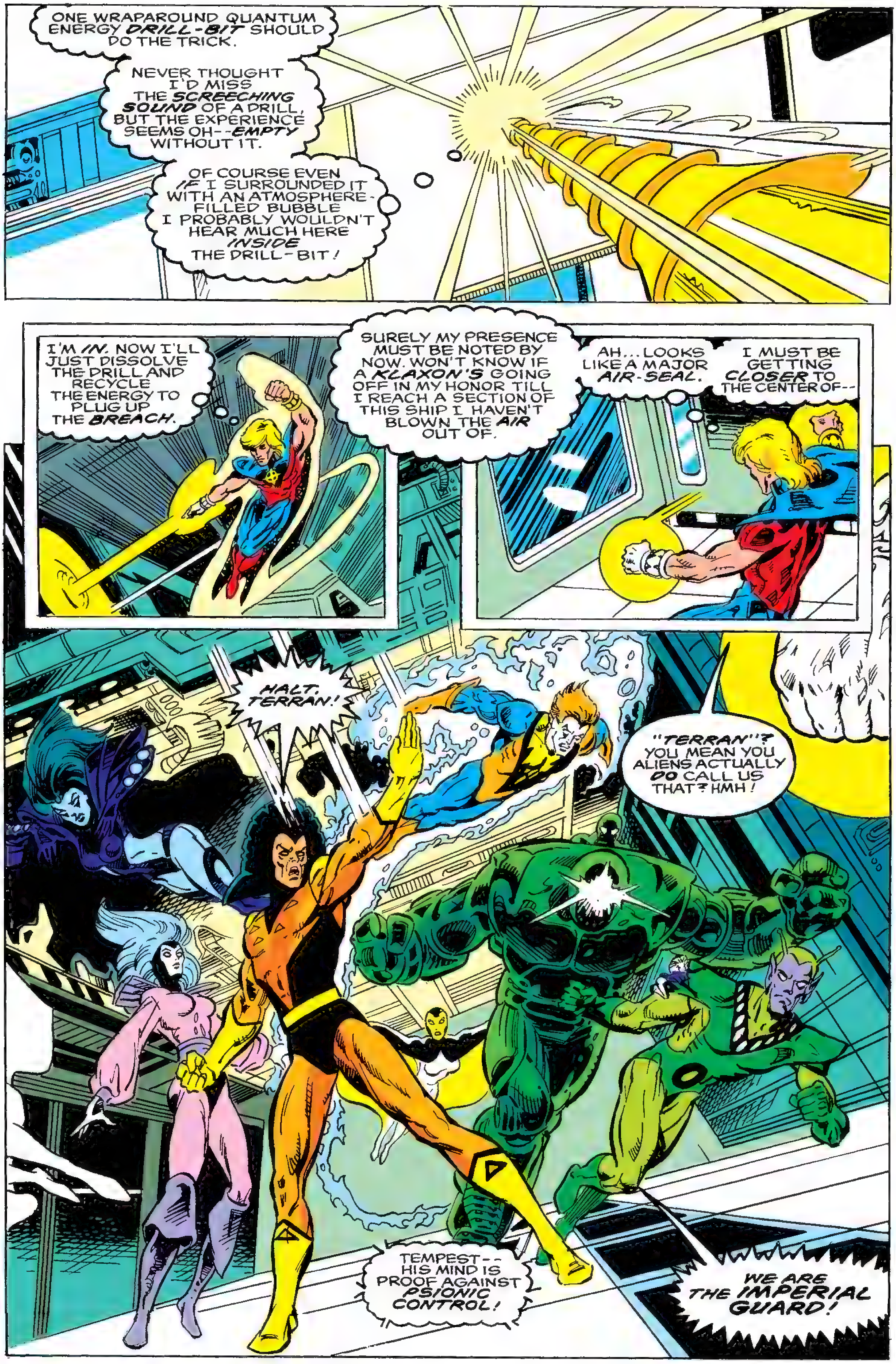

BETTER TRY ANOTHER *CONCUSSIVE BLAST!*
AW, NO! IT'S JUST--
--NGGGGH!
QUASAR?
CAUGHT HIM!
UH, THANKS. ANOTHER FOOT AND *FIERY GUY* OVER THERE WOULD'VE *TOASTED* ME.
WELL, I'M NOT HAVING MUCH LUCK STOPPING *STAR-MUSCLES*--
--BUT HOT STUFF'S *ANOTHER* MATTER!

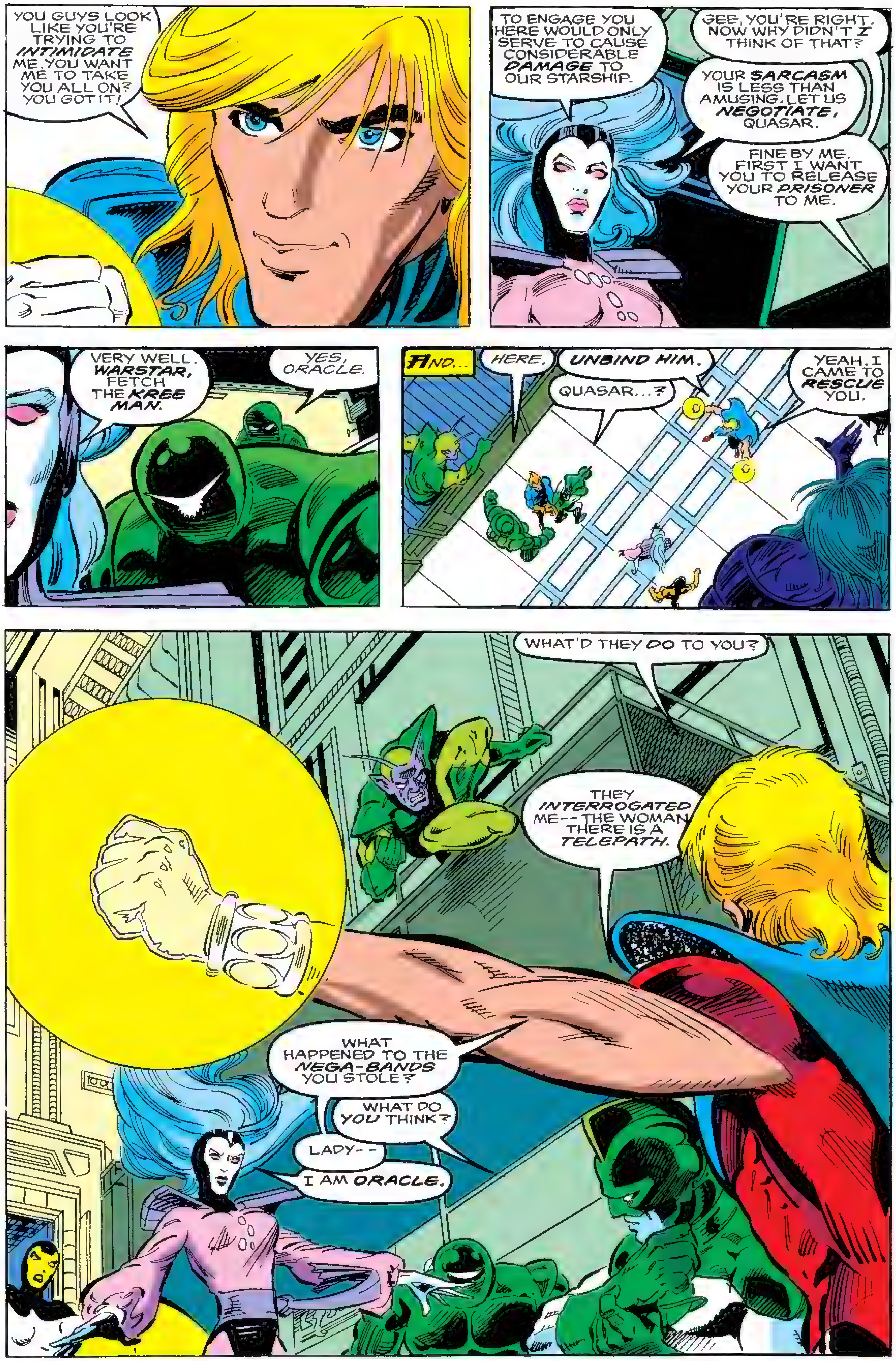

OKAY. THAT BUBBLE LOOKS LIKE IT'S HOLDING HIM. NOW LET'S TAG-TEAM HIS PARTNER.
"TAG-TEAM"?
STARRY'S BODY SEEMS TO ABSORB MY QUANTUM-ENERGY--BOTH FROM MY BLASTS AND MY CONSTRUCTS--AND CONVERT THEM INTO STRENGTH.
WHAT OTHER TRICKS DO I HAVE UP MY SLEEVE?
MAYBE IF HER AND I BOTH BOMBARD HIM WITH A BARRAGE OF WAVELENGTHS SIMULTANEOUSLY, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO SYNTHESIZE THEM ALL.
STILL NO SUCH LUCK! AND I NEARLY HIT HER WITH FRIENDLY FIRE!
ONLY ONE OPTION LEFT...
...ASSUMING I CAN GET IN CLOSE ENOUGH WITHOUT HAVING MY HEAD HANDED TO ME.
OKAY, CREWCUT--
--WE'RE OUTTA HERE!
THAT FLASH--QUASAR MUST HAVE QUANTUM-JUMPED!

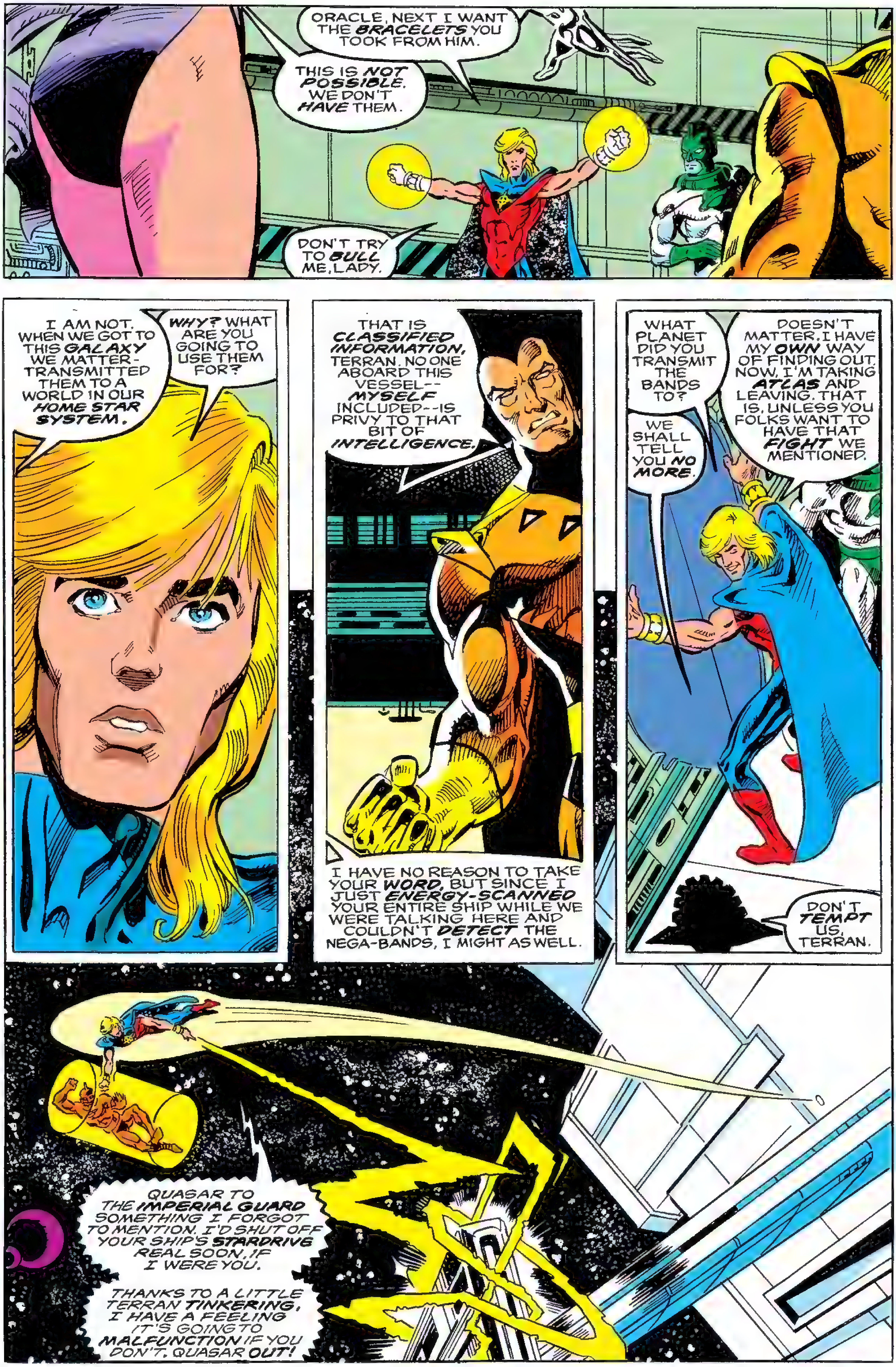

STOP SQUIRMING, FELLA! IF I LET GO OF YOU, I MAY NEVER FIND YOU!
WHERE HAVE YOU TAKEN ME?
A RELAXING LITTLE PLACE I CALL THE QUANTUM ZONE. WE'LL BE OUT OF IT IN A MOMENT.
SEE? BACK IN REAL SPACE.
SEE THAT SPECK OF LIGHT THERE? THAT'S EARTH'S SUN. WE'RE ABOUT A LIGHT YEAR AWAY.
I'D KEEP AN EYE ON IT, IF I WERE YOU. WHILE I'M JUMPING BACK, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET THERE ON YOUR OWN POWER.
ASSUMING YOU CAN MAKE NEAR-LIGHT SPEED, SEE YOU IN A LITTLE OVER A YEAR!
AND SOON...
I'M BACK! WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT CHUNKY FOR A WHILE!
WHAT DID YOU--?
JUST SENT HIM ON A LITTLE FIELD TRIP.
HEY. LOOKS LIKE HOTSY TOTSY'S HOLDING TIGHT.
THAT MEANS I'LL FINALLY BE ABLE TO SHAG AFTER THAT ESCAPING SHI'AR SHIP.
TAKE ME WITH YOU.
NOT THAT I COULDN'T USE YOUR HELP, BUT IT WOULD BE REALLY NICE IF I HAD SOMEONE HERE I COULD COUNT ON TO GUARD FIREFACE AND THE STARGATE!

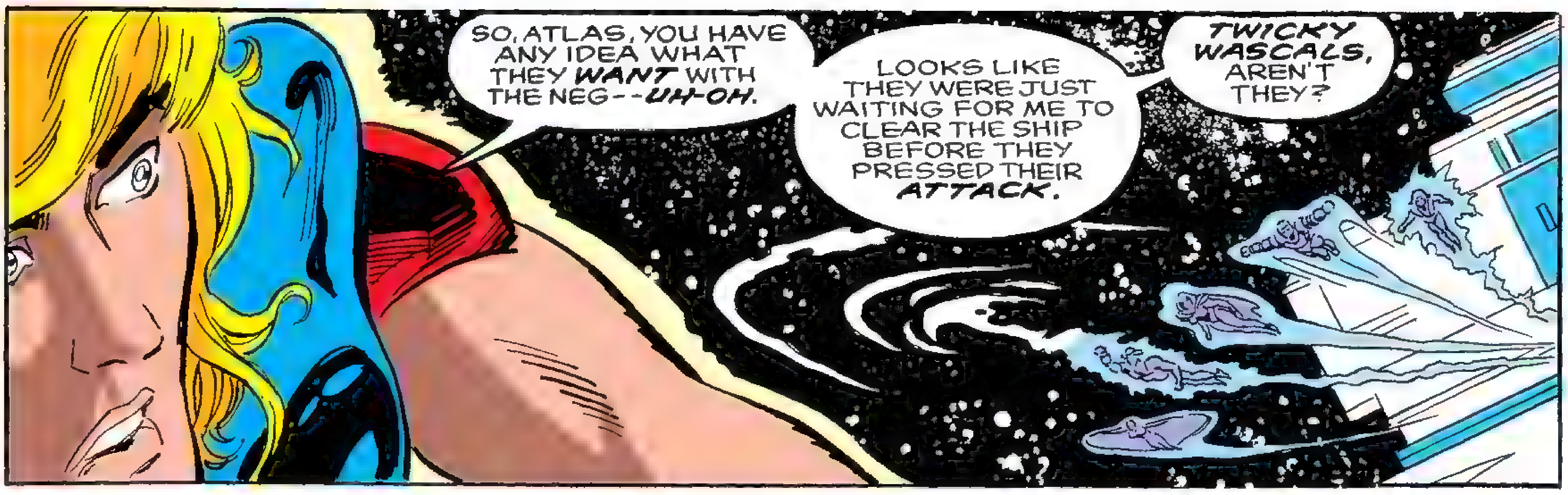

QUASAR TO THE *AVENGERS* VIA THE EIGHT-MINUTE TRANSMISSION DELAY. I'M TAKING OFF TO THE SHI'AR GALAXY IN PURSUIT OF THAT *SHIP*. *HER* WILL REMAIN AT THE STARGATE. QUASAR *OUT*!
THANKS, HER. BE BACK AS SOON AS I CAN! HANG *IN* THERE.
COUNTLESS LIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF QUASAR...
< THAT'S IT, *ELECTRON*. THIS KREE'S BEEN PSYCHICALLY DRAINED OF ALL *STRATEGIC INFORMATION*. >
< *NOW* WHAT DO WE DO WITH HIM? >
< HE'S A *PRISONER OF WAR*. WE'LL-- >
< ATTENTION, IMPERIAL GUARDSMEN! AN UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT PASSED THROUGH THE STARGATE TEN LIGHT MINUTES BEHIND US! >
< QUASAR?!? >

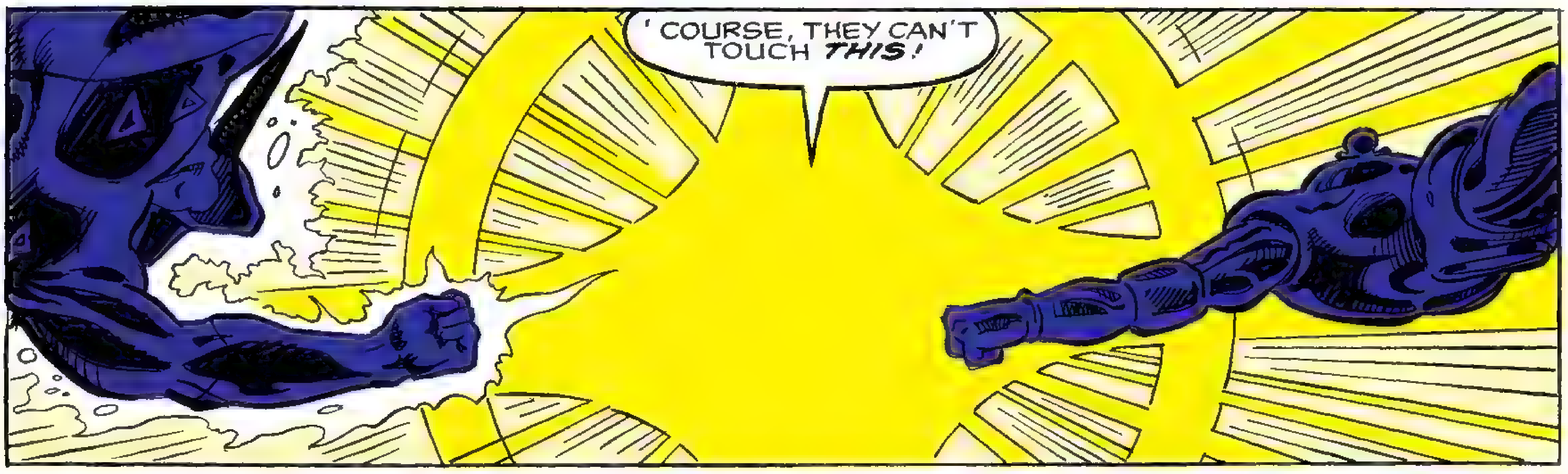

"<IF SO, THEN NEUTRON AND STARBOLT SACRIFICED THEMSELVES FOR NOTHING!"
HEY, EPOCH? YOU THERE, LITTLE GODDAUGHTER?
OF COURSE. I AM IN CONSTANT INTERFACE WITH YOUR QUANTUM-BANDS.
I NEED A LITTLE INFORMATION-- WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SHI'AR?
WOULD YOU PREFER THAT I FOCUS MY ENERGIES ON THIS RATHER THAN THE PREVIOUS EXERCISE YOU POSED ME?*
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING OFF THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD?
NO.
*LAST ISSUE.
WELL, WORK ON THE SHI'AR THING. I'M HEADING TOWARD THE HEART OF THEIR EMPIRE.
WILL DO, QUASAR.
TIME FOR ANOTHER DISTANCE-CRUMPLING QUANTUM-JUMP!
ALL RIGHT! HOW'S THAT FOR PRECISION? NEARLY ZAPPED IN UP THEIR TAILPIPE!
HMM. THERE'S NO POLITE WAY TO ASK TO BE LET IN--I DON'T SPEAK SHI'ARESE, AND LITTLE EPOCH IS LESS THAN A LOT OF HELP.
GUESS I'LL JUST BARGE RIGHT IN. WHAT THE HECK--THIS IS WAR.

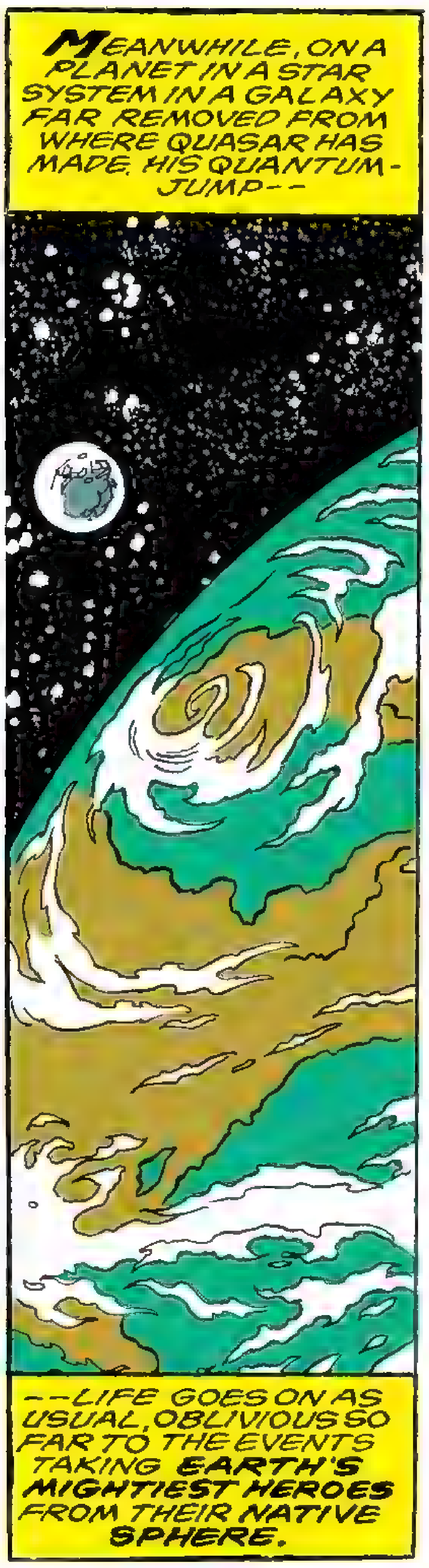

ONE WRAPAROUND QUANTUM ENERGY *DRILL-BIT* SHOULD DO THE TRICK.
NEVER THOUGHT I'D MISS THE *SCREECHING SOUND* OF A DRILL, BUT THE EXPERIENCE SEEMS OH--*EMPTY* WITHOUT IT.
OF COURSE EVEN *IF* I SURROUNDED IT WITH AN ATMOSPHERE-FILLED BUBBLE I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HEAR MUCH HERE *INSIDE* THE DRILL-BIT!
I'M *IN*. NOW I'LL JUST DISSOLVE THE DRILL AND RECYCLE THE ENERGY TO PLUG UP THE *BREACH*.
SURELY MY PRESENCE MUST BE NOTED BY NOW. WON'T KNOW IF A *KLAXON'S* GOING OFF IN MY HONOR TILL I REACH A SECTION OF THIS SHIP I HAVEN'T BLOWN THE *AIR* OUT OF.
AH...LOOKS LIKE A MAJOR *AIR-SEAL*.
I MUST BE GETTING *CLOSER* TO THE CENTER OF--
HALT, TERRAN!
"TERRAN"? YOU MEAN YOU ALIENS ACTUALLY *DO* CALL US THAT? HMH!
TEMPEST--HIS MIND IS PROOF AGAINST *PSIONIC CONTROL!*
WE ARE THE IMPERIAL GUARD!

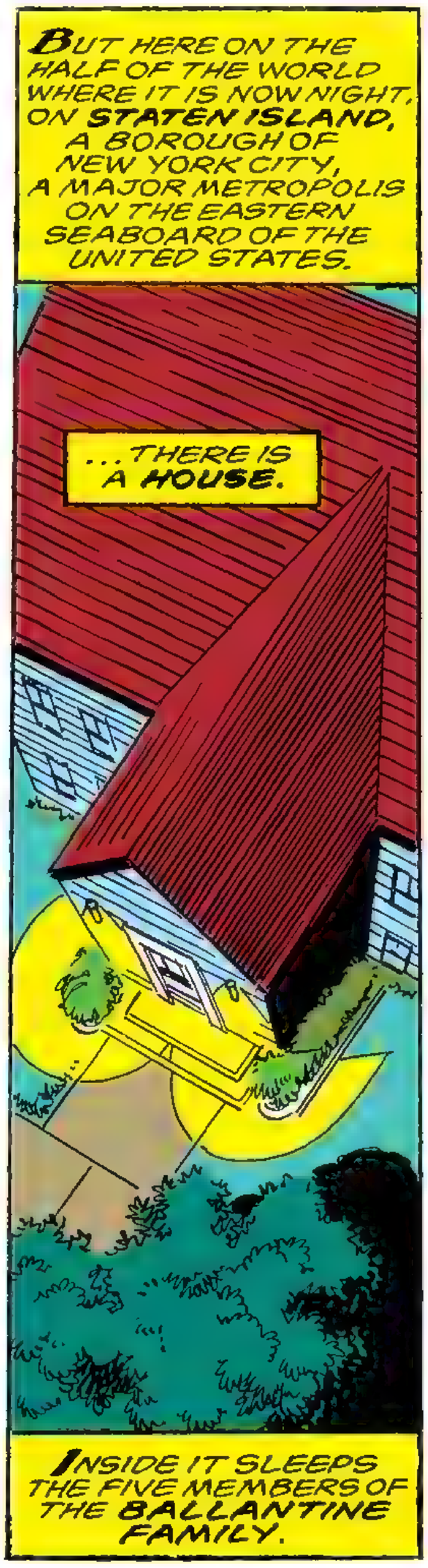

YOU GUYS LOOK LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO *INTIMIDATE* ME. YOU WANT ME TO TAKE YOU ALL ON? YOU GOT IT!
TO ENGAGE YOU HERE WOULD ONLY SERVE TO CAUSE CONSIDERABLE *DAMAGE* TO OUR STARSHIP.
GEE, YOU'RE RIGHT. NOW WHY DIDN'T *I* THINK OF THAT?
YOUR ***SARCASM*** IS LESS THAN AMUSING. LET US ***NEGOTIATE***, QUASAR.
FINE BY ME. FIRST I WANT YOU TO RELEASE YOUR *PRISONER* TO ME.
VERY WELL. ***WARSTAR***, FETCH THE ***KREE MAN***.
YES, ORACLE.
AND...
HERE.
UNBIND HIM.
QUASAR...?
YEAH. I CAME TO *RESCUE* YOU.
WHAT'D THEY *DO* TO YOU?
THEY *INTERROGATED* ME-- THE WOMAN THERE IS A *TELEPATH*.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *NEGA-BANDS* YOU STOLE?
WHAT DO *YOU* THINK?
LADY--
I AM ***ORACLE***.

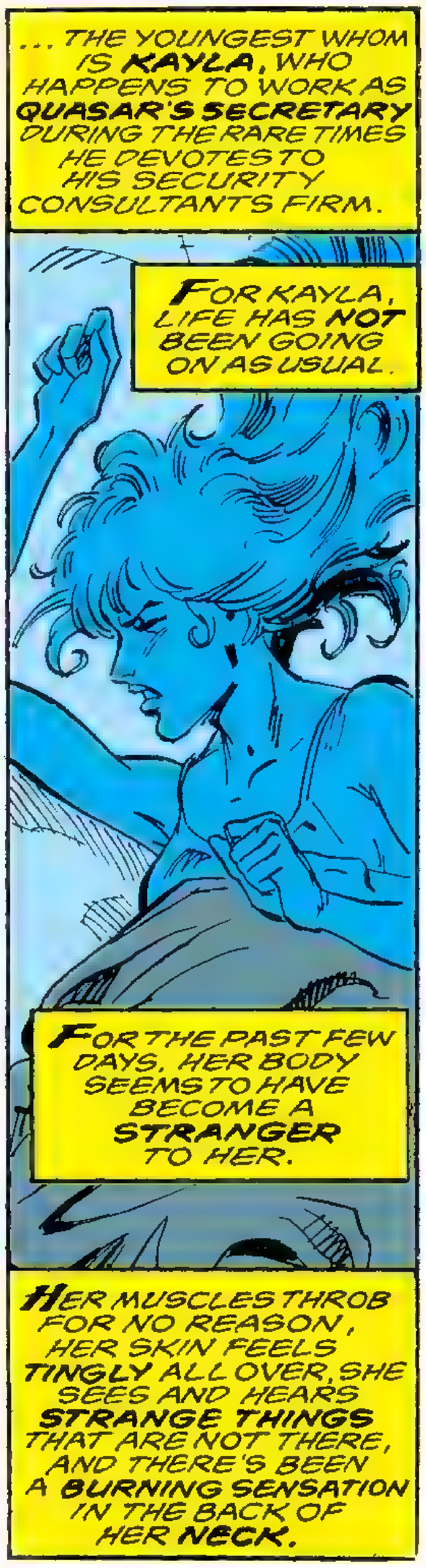

ORACLE, NEXT I WANT THE **BRACELETS** YOU TOOK FROM HIM.
THIS IS **NOT POSSIBLE.** WE DON'T **HAVE** THEM.
DON'T TRY TO **BULL** ME, LADY.
I AM NOT. WHEN WE GOT TO THIS **GALAXY** WE MATTER-TRANSMITTED THEM TO A WORLD IN OUR **HOME STAR SYSTEM.**
WHY? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO USE THEM FOR?
THAT IS **CLASSIFIED INFORMATION,** TERRAN. NO ONE ABOARD THIS VESSEL--**MYSELF** INCLUDED--IS PRIVY TO THAT BIT OF **INTELLIGENCE.**
I HAVE NO REASON TO TAKE YOUR **WORD,** BUT SINCE I JUST **ENERGY-SCANNED** YOUR ENTIRE SHIP WHILE WE WERE TALKING HERE AND COULDN'T **DETECT** THE NEGA-BANDS, I MIGHT AS WELL.
WHAT PLANET DID YOU TRANSMIT THE BANDS TO?
DOESN'T MATTER. I HAVE MY **OWN** WAY OF FINDING OUT. NOW, I'M TAKING **ATLAS** AND LEAVING. THAT IS, UNLESS YOU FOLKS WANT TO HAVE THAT **FIGHT** WE MENTIONED.
WE SHALL TELL YOU **NO MORE.**
DON'T **TEMPT** US, TERRAN.
QUASAR TO THE **IMPERIAL GUARD** SOMETHING I FORGOT TO MENTION. I'D SHUT OFF YOUR SHIP'S **STARDRIVE** REAL SOON, IF I WERE YOU.
THANKS TO A LITTLE TERRAN **TINKERING,** I HAVE A FEELING IT'S GOING TO **MALFUNCTION** IF YOU DON'T. QUASAR **OUT!**

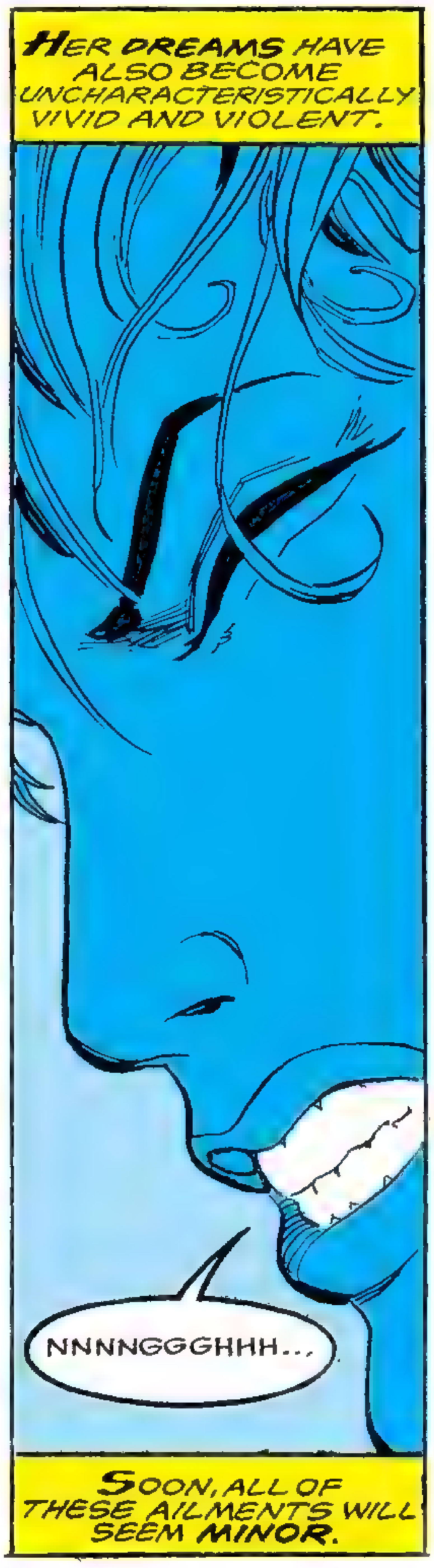

SO, ATLAS, YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THEY *WANT* WITH THE NEG--*UH-OH.*
LOOKS LIKE THEY WERE JUST WAITING FOR ME TO CLEAR THE SHIP BEFORE THEY PRESSED THEIR *ATTACK.*
TWICKY WASCALS, AREN'T THEY?

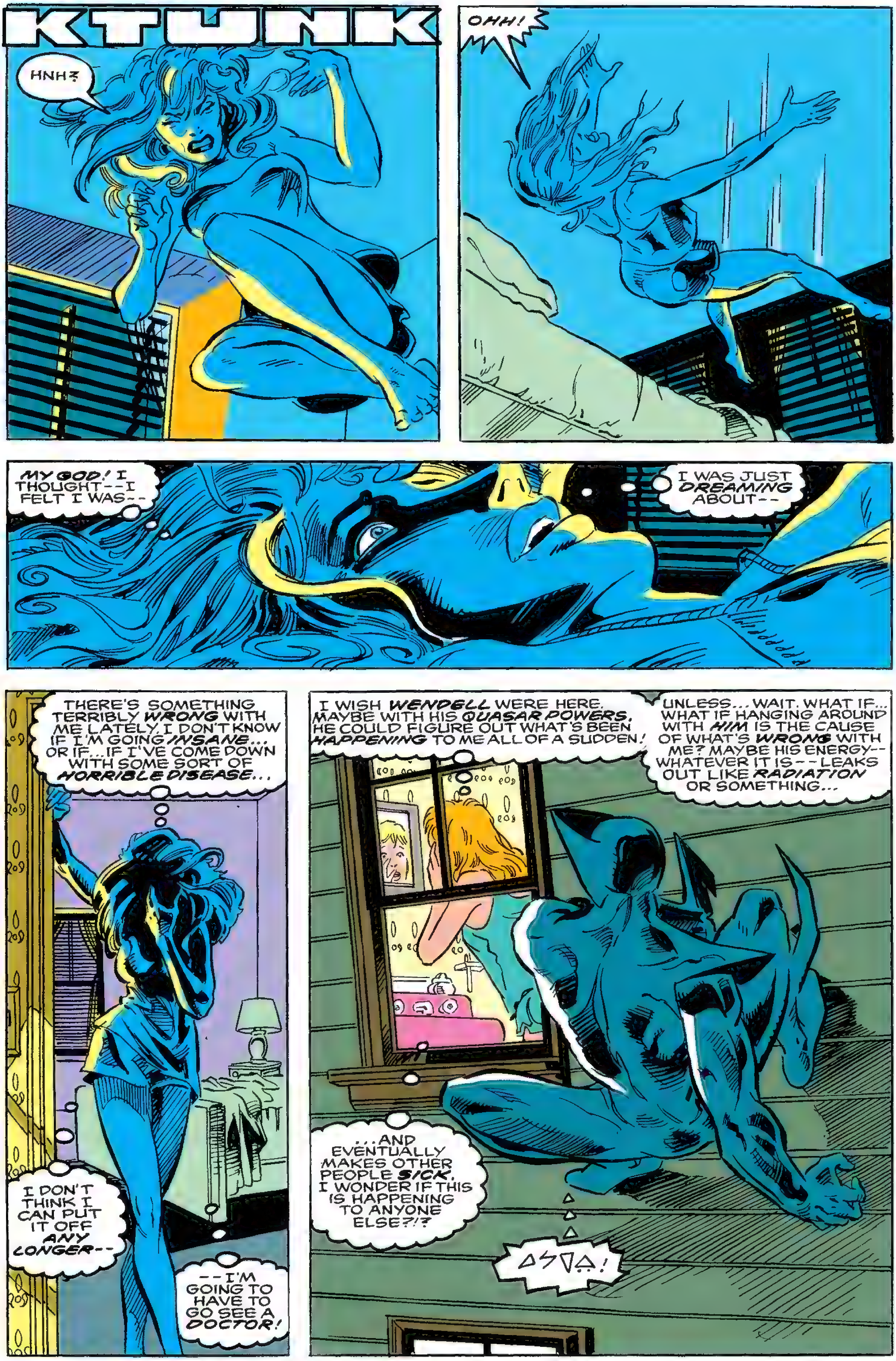

'COURSE, THEY CAN'T TOUCH *THIS!*

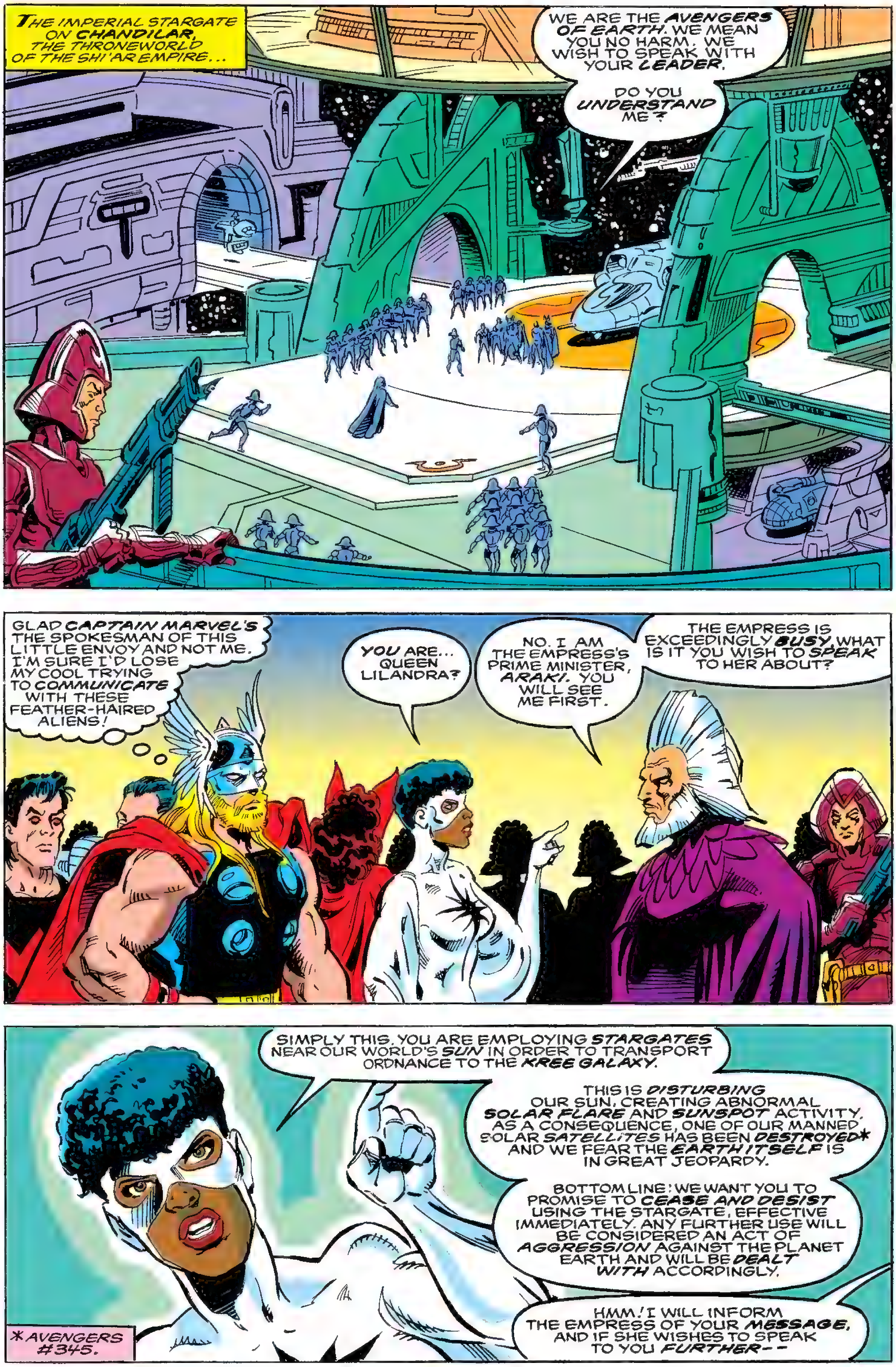

MEANWHILE, ON A PLANET IN A STAR SYSTEM IN A GALAXY FAR REMOVED FROM WHERE QUASAR HAS MADE HIS QUANTUM-JUMP--
--LIFE GOES ON AS USUAL, OBLIVIOUS SO FAR TO THE EVENTS TAKING **EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES** FROM THEIR NATIVE **SPHERE.**

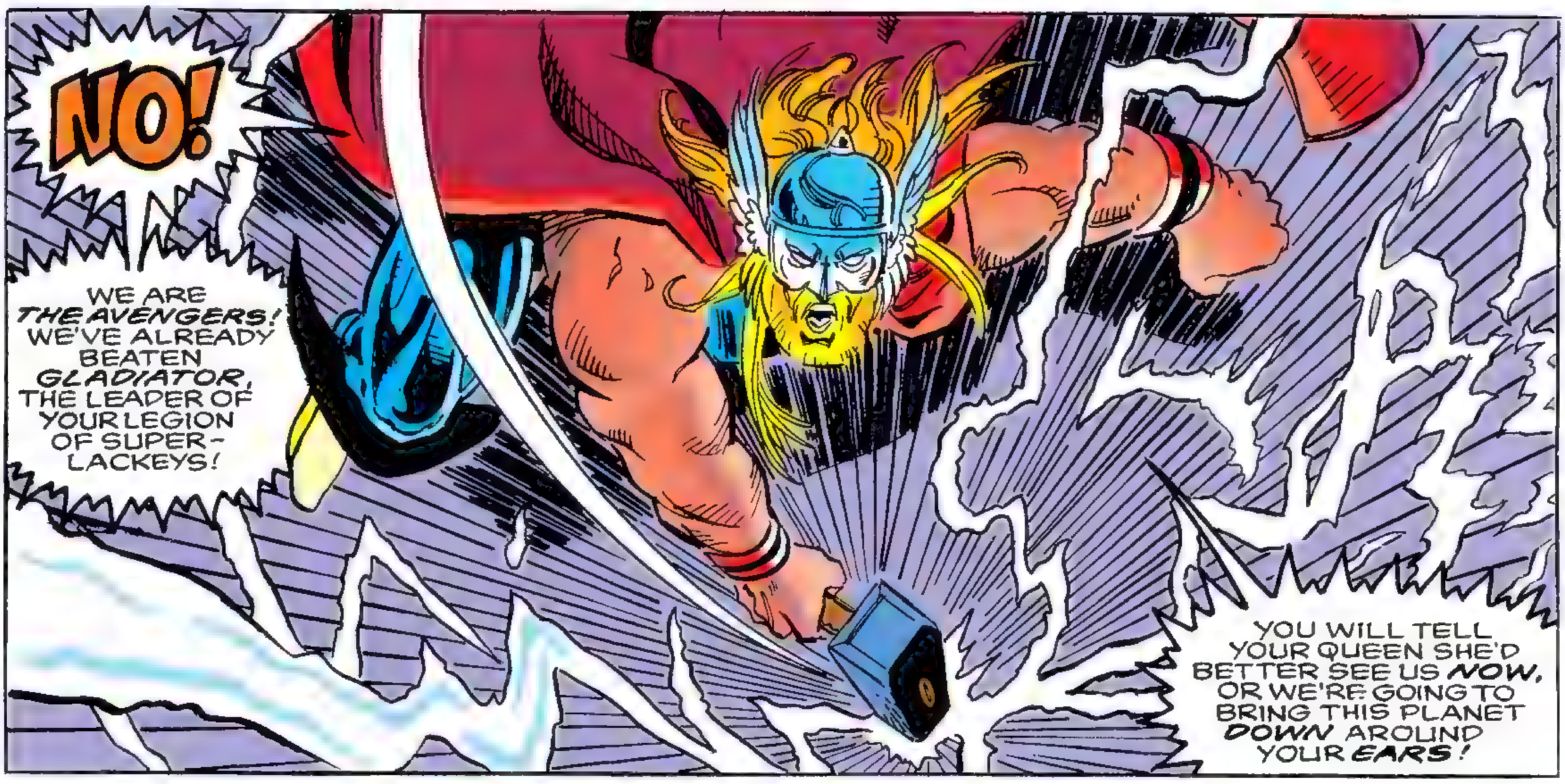

BUT HERE ON THE HALF OF THE WORLD WHERE IT IS NOW NIGHT, ON **STATEN ISLAND,** A BOROUGH OF NEW YORK CITY, A MAJOR METROPOLIS ON THE EASTERN SEABOARD OF THE UNITED STATES.
...THERE IS A **HOUSE.**
INSIDE IT SLEEPS THE FIVE MEMBERS OF THE **BALLANTINE FAMILY.**

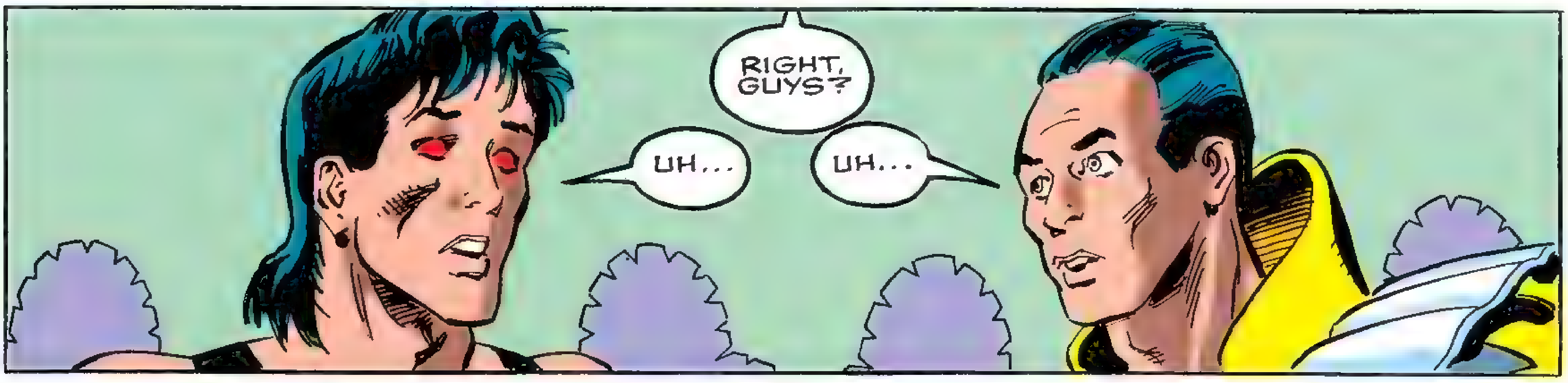

...THE YOUNGEST WHOM IS **KAYLA,** WHO HAPPENS TO WORK AS **QUASAR'S SECRETARY** DURING THE RARE TIMES HE DEVOTES TO HIS SECURITY CONSULTANT'S FIRM.
FOR KAYLA, LIFE HAS **NOT** BEEN GOING ON AS USUAL.
FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS, HER BODY SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME A **STRANGER** TO HER.
HER MUSCLES THROB FOR NO REASON, HER SKIN FEELS **TINGLY** ALL OVER, SHE SEES AND HEARS **STRANGE THINGS** THAT ARE NOT THERE, AND THERE'S BEEN A **BURNING SENSATION** IN THE BACK OF HER **NECK.**

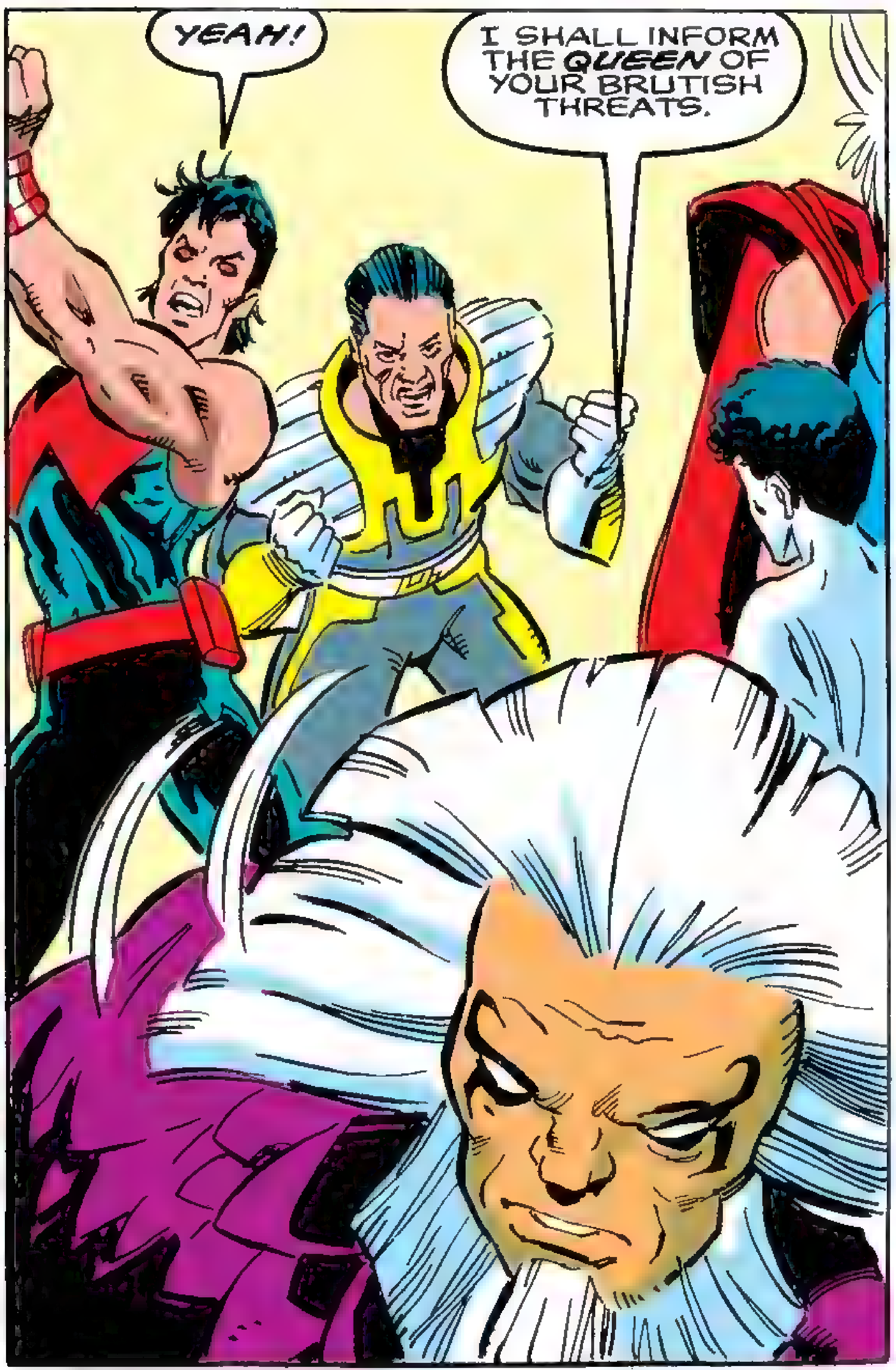

HER **DREAMS** HAVE ALSO BECOME UNCHARACTERISTICALLY VIVID AND VIOLENT.
NNNNGGGHHH...
SOON, ALL OF THESE AILMENTS WILL SEEM **MINOR.**

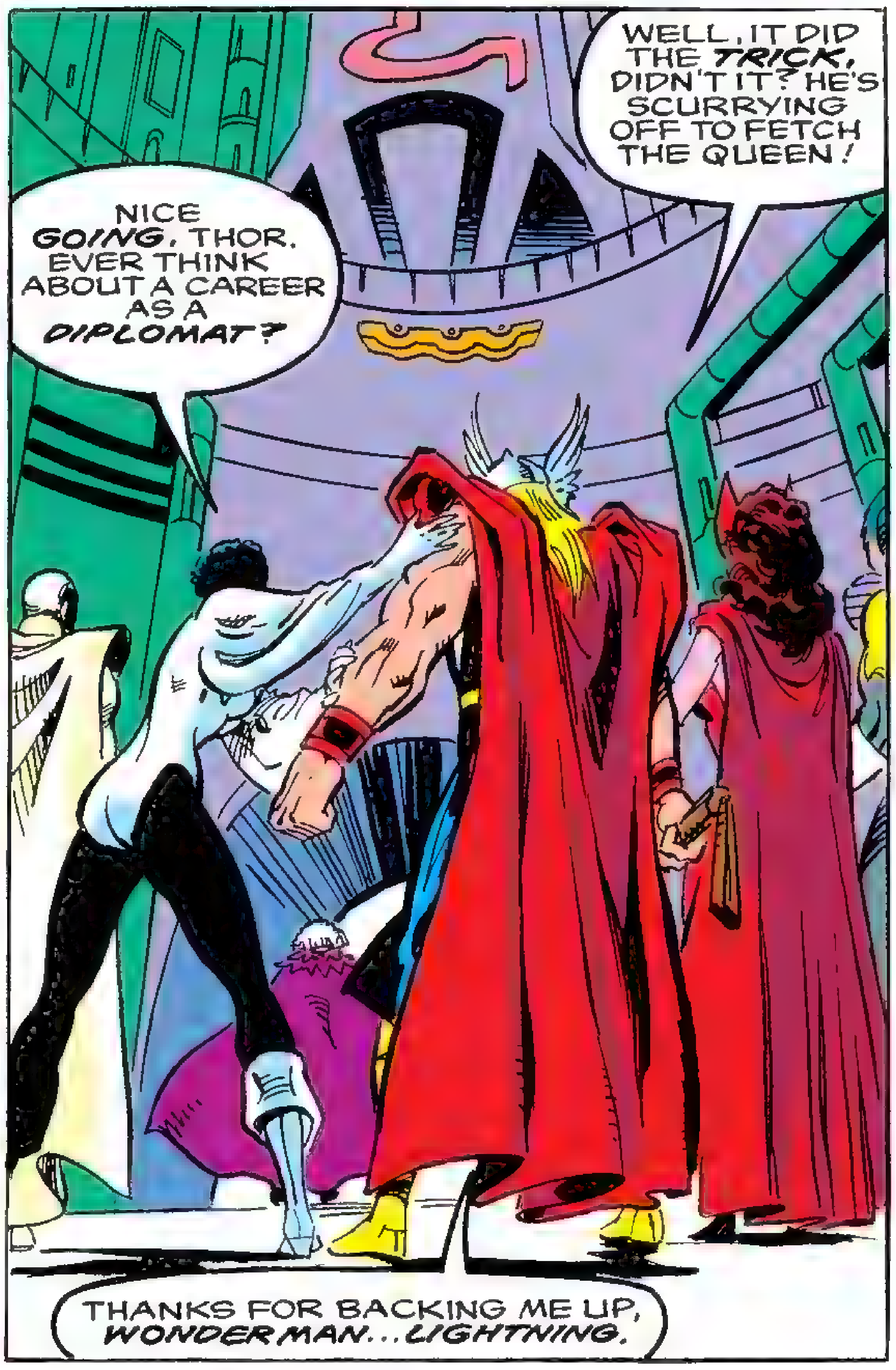

KTUNK
HNH?
OHH!
MY GOD! I THOUGHT--I FELT I WAS--
I WAS JUST *DREAMING* ABOUT--
THERE'S SOMETHING TERRIBLY *WRONG* WITH ME LATELY. I DON'T KNOW IF I'M GOING *INSANE*... OR IF... IF I'VE COME DOWN WITH SOME SORT OF *HORRIBLE DISEASE*...
I DON'T THINK I CAN PUT IT OFF *ANY LONGER*--
--I'M GOING TO HAVE TO GO SEE A *DOCTOR*!
I WISH *WENDELL* WERE HERE. MAYBE WITH HIS *QUASAR POWERS*, HE COULD FIGURE OUT WHAT'S BEEN *HAPPENING* TO ME ALL OF A SUDDEN!
UNLESS... WAIT. WHAT IF... WHAT IF HANGING AROUND WITH *HIM* IS THE CAUSE OF WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH ME? MAYBE HIS ENERGY--WHATEVER IT IS--LEAKS OUT LIKE *RADIATION* OR SOMETHING...
...AND EVENTUALLY MAKES OTHER PEOPLE *SICK*. I WONDER IF THIS IS HAPPENING TO ANYONE ELSE?!?
△ϟ▽△!

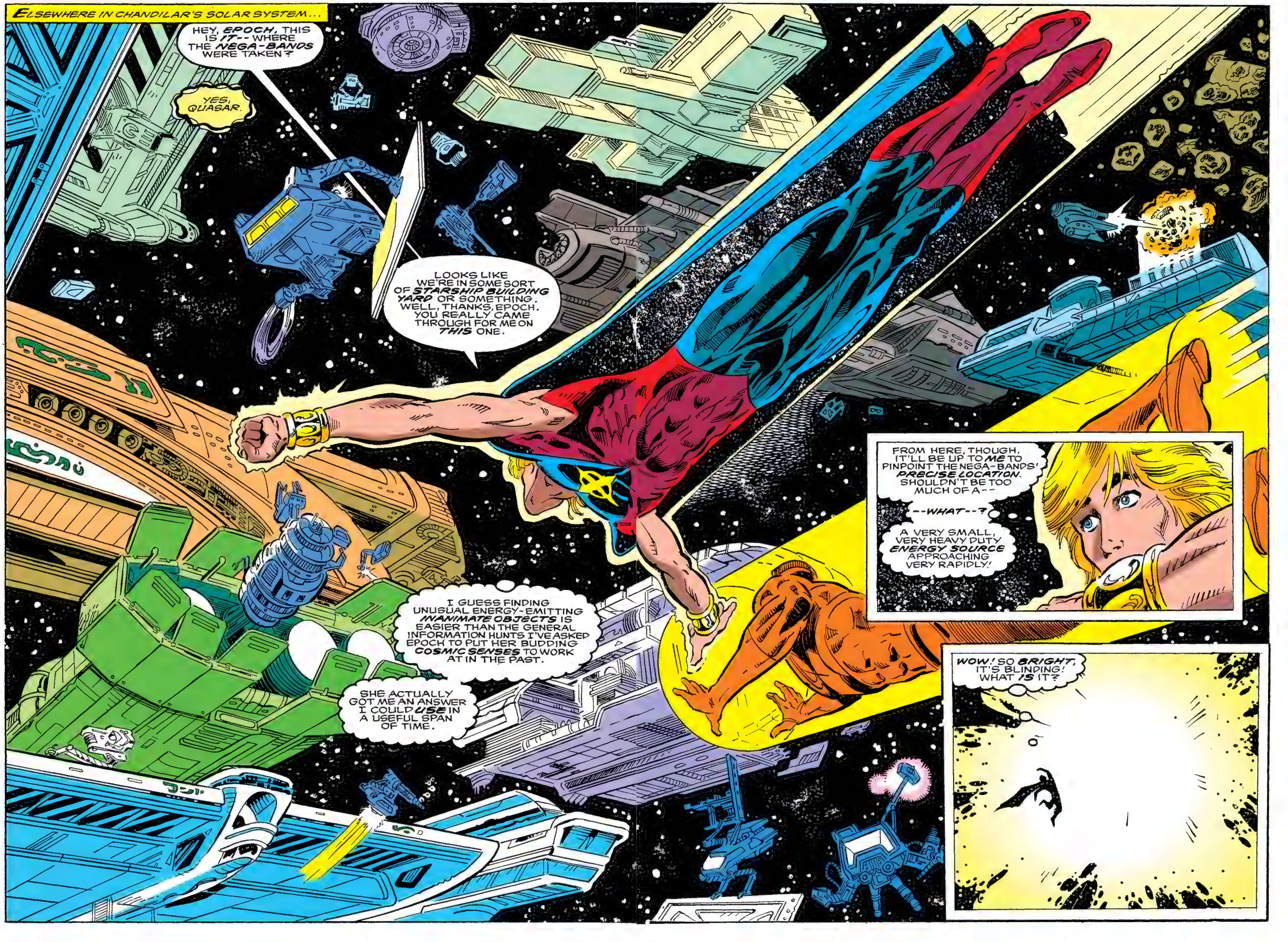

THE IMPERIAL STARGATE ON CHANDILAR, THE THRONEWORLD OF THE SHI'AR EMPIRE...
WE ARE THE AVENGERS OF EARTH. WE MEAN YOU NO HARM. WE WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOUR LEADER.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?
GLAD CAPTAIN MARVEL'S THE SPOKESMAN OF THIS LITTLE ENVOY AND NOT ME. I'M SURE I'D LOSE MY COOL TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH THESE FEATHER-HAIRED ALIENS!
YOU ARE... QUEEN LILANDRA?
NO. I AM THE EMPRESS'S PRIME MINISTER, ARAKI. YOU WILL SEE ME FIRST.
THE EMPRESS IS EXCEEDINGLY BUSY. WHAT IS IT YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO HER ABOUT?
SIMPLY THIS. YOU ARE EMPLOYING STARGATES NEAR OUR WORLD'S SUN IN ORDER TO TRANSPORT ORDNANCE TO THE KREE GALAXY.
THIS IS DISTURBING OUR SUN, CREATING ABNORMAL SOLAR FLARE AND SUNSPOT ACTIVITY. AS A CONSEQUENCE, ONE OF OUR MANNED SOLAR SATELLITES HAS BEEN DESTROYED* AND WE FEAR THE EARTH ITSELF IS IN GREAT JEOPARDY.
BOTTOM LINE: WE WANT YOU TO PROMISE TO CEASE AND DESIST USING THE STARGATE, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. ANY FURTHER USE WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ACT OF AGGRESSION AGAINST THE PLANET EARTH AND WILL BE DEALT WITH ACCORDINGLY.
HMM! I WILL INFORM THE EMPRESS OF YOUR MESSAGE, AND IF SHE WISHES TO SPEAK TO YOU FURTHER--
*AVENGERS #345.

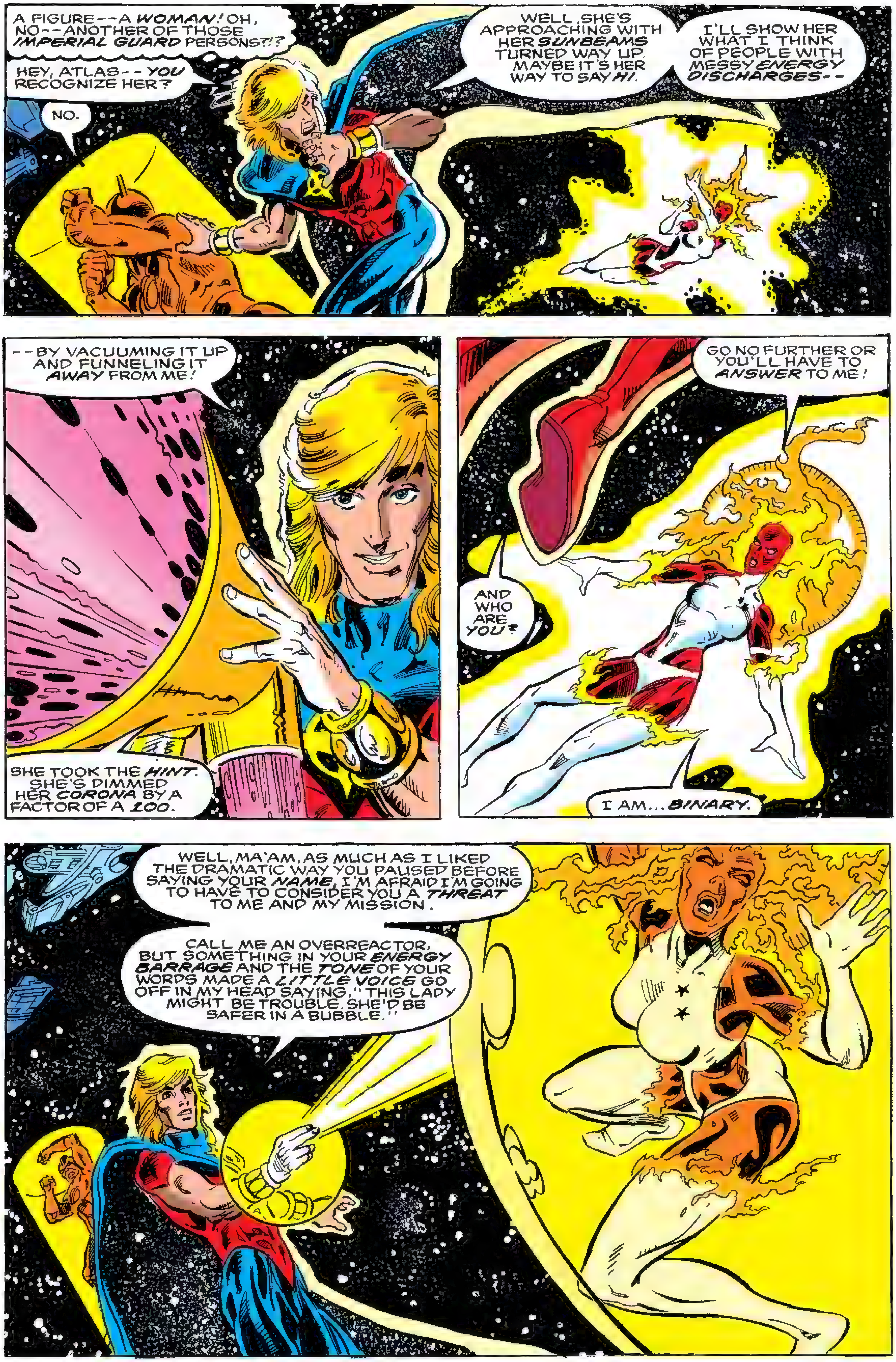

NO!
WE ARE THE AVENGERS! WE'VE ALREADY BEATEN GLADIATOR, THE LEADER OF YOUR LEGION OF SUPER-LACKEYS!
YOU WILL TELL YOUR QUEEN SHE'D BETTER SEE US NOW, OR WE'RE GOING TO BRING THIS PLANET DOWN AROUND YOUR EARS!

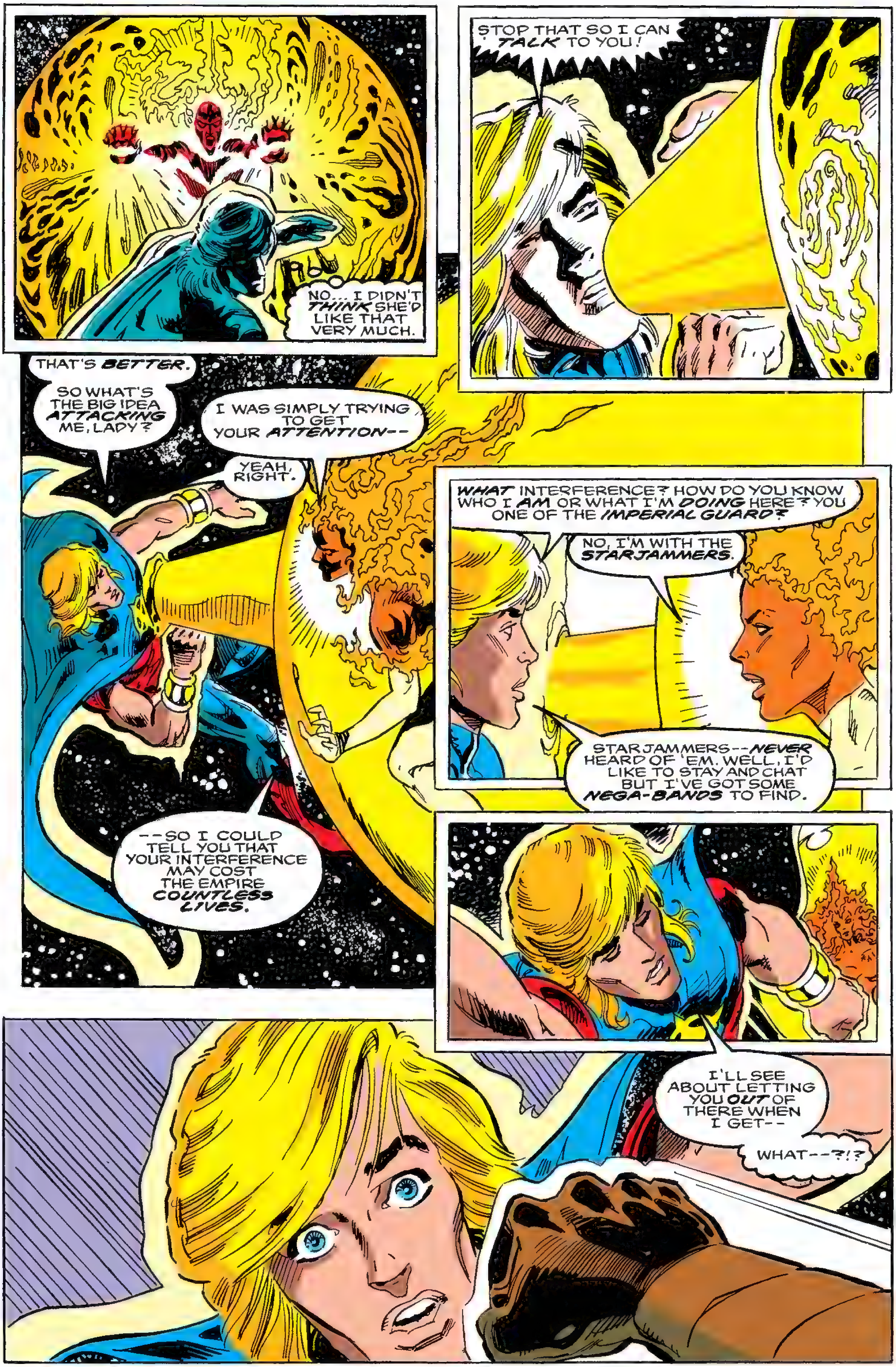

RIGHT, GUYS?
UH...
UH...

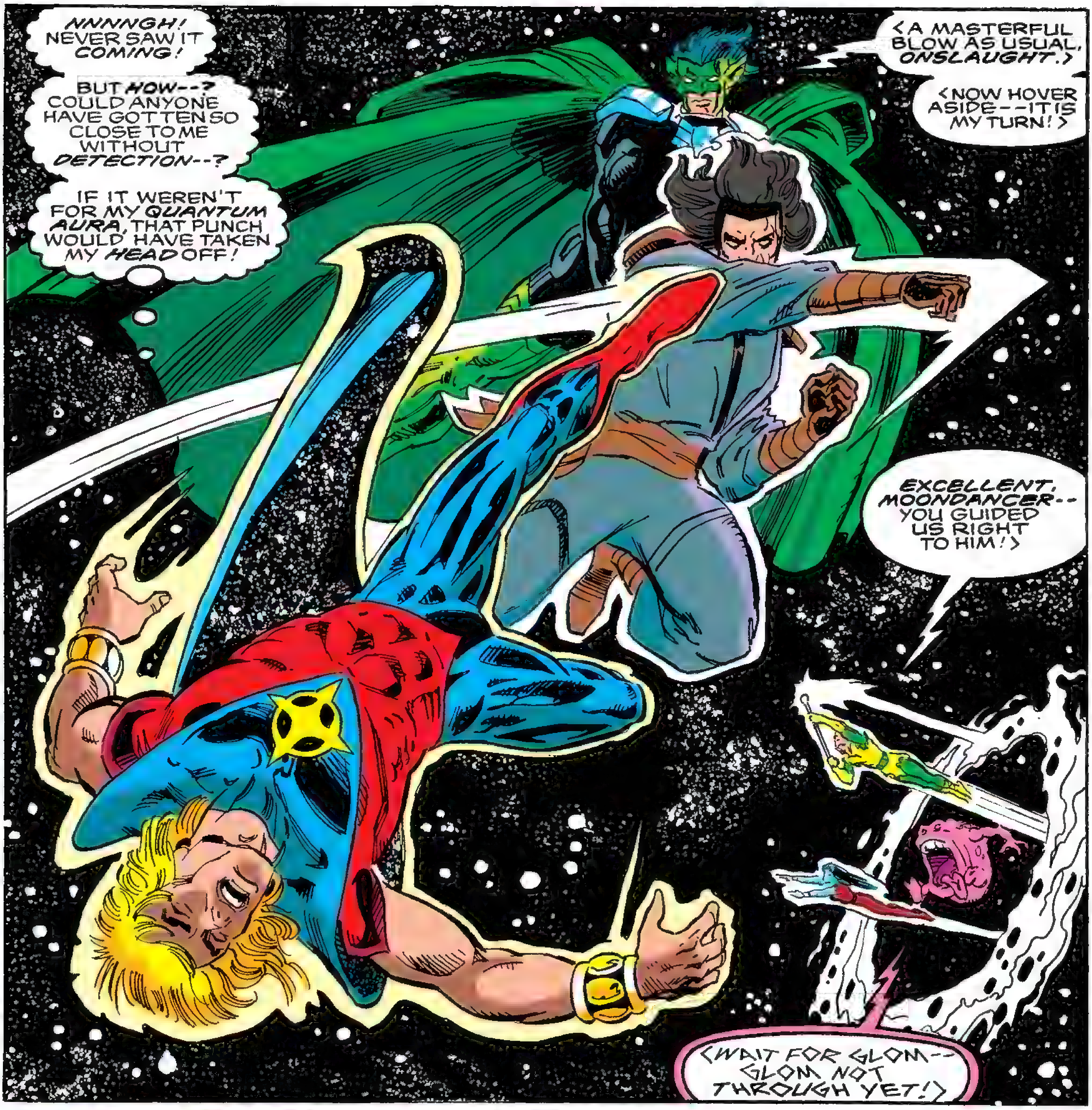

YEAH!
I SHALL INFORM THE QUEEN OF YOUR BRUTISH THREATS.

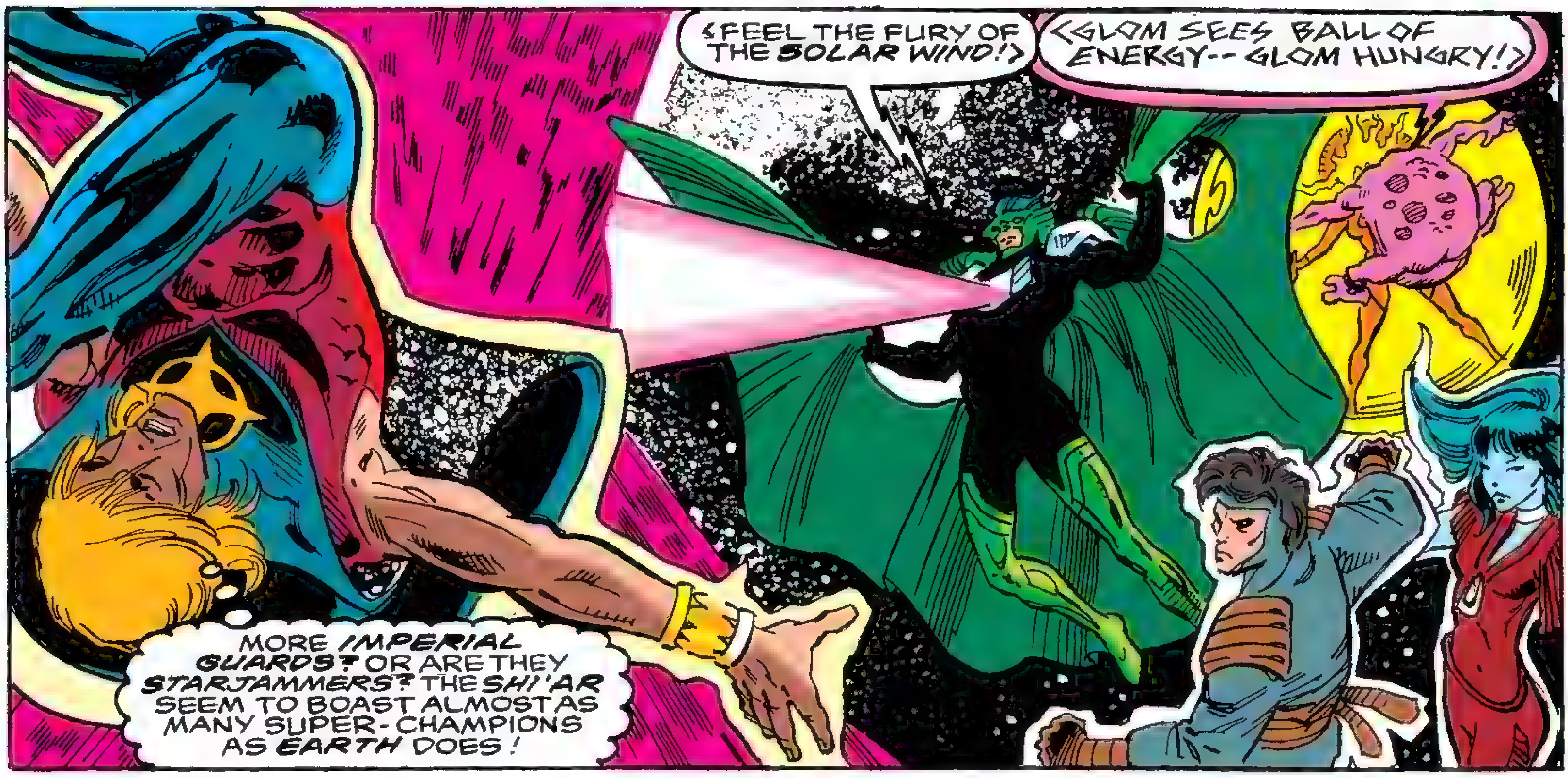

NICE GOING, THOR. EVER THINK ABOUT A CAREER AS A DIPLOMAT?
WELL, IT DID THE TRICK, DIDN'T IT? HE'S SCURRYING OFF TO FETCH THE QUEEN!
THANKS FOR BACKING ME UP, WONDER MAN... LIGHTNING.

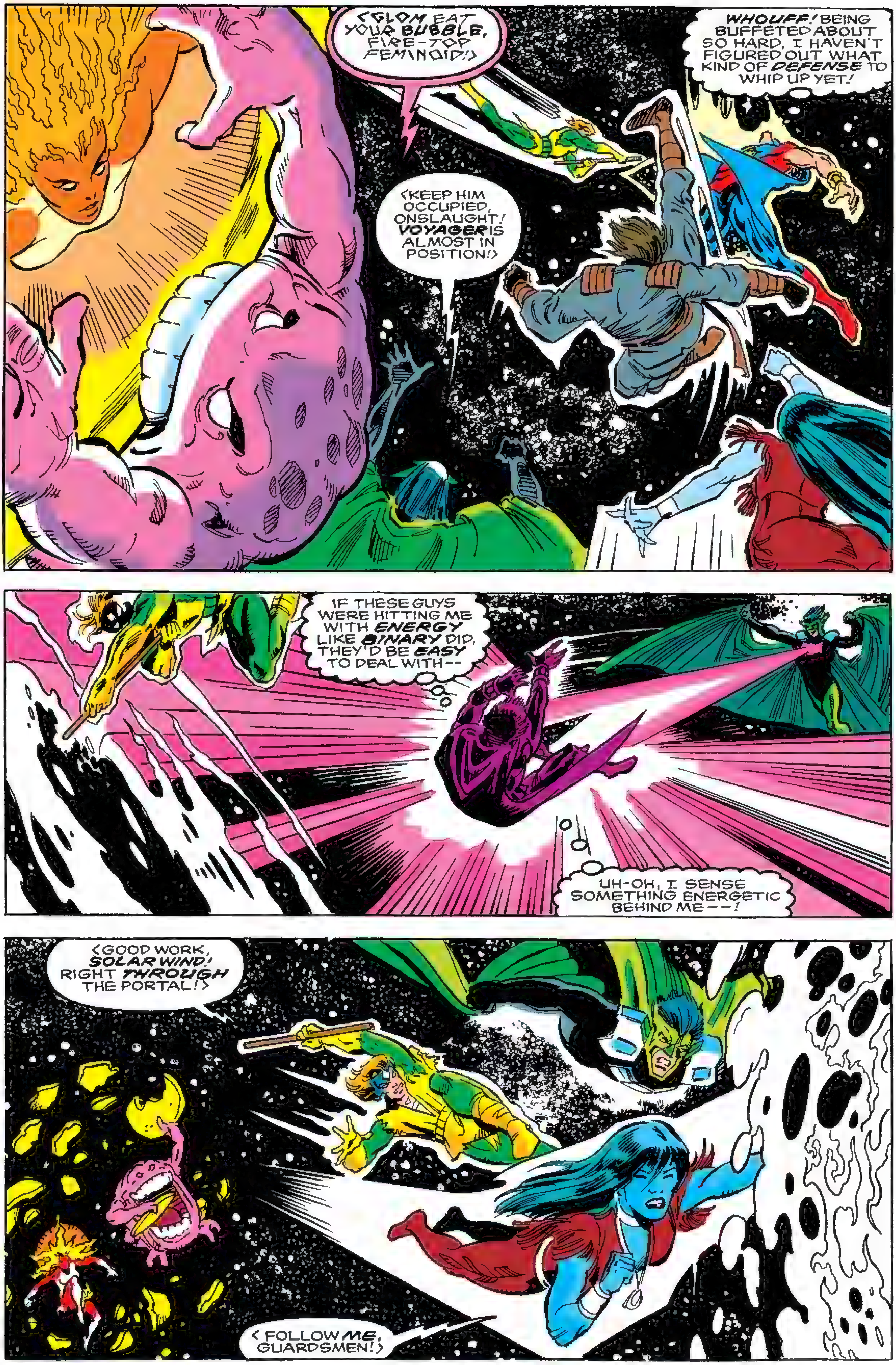

ELSEWHERE IN CHANDILAR'S SOLAR SYSTEM...
HEY, EPOCH, THIS IS IT--WHERE THE NEGA-BANDS WERE TAKEN?
YES, QUASAR.
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE IN SOME SORT OF STARSHIP BUILDING YARD OR SOMETHING. WELL, THANKS, EPOCH. YOU REALLY CAME THROUGH FOR ME ON THIS ONE.
I GUESS FINDING UNUSUAL ENERGY-EMITTING INANIMATE OBJECTS IS EASIER THAN THE GENERAL INFORMATION HUNTS I'VE ASKED EPOCH TO PUT HER BUDDING COSMIC SENSES TO WORK AT IN THE PAST.
SHE ACTUALLY GOT ME AN ANSWER I COULD USE IN A USEFUL SPAN OF TIME.
FROM HERE, THOUGH, IT'LL BE UP TO ME TO PINPOINT THE NEGA-BANDS' PRECISE LOCATION. SHOULDN'T BE TOO MUCH OF A--
--WHAT--?
A VERY SMALL, VERY HEAVY DUTY ENERGY SOURCE APPROACHING VERY RAPIDLY!
WOW! SO BRIGHT, IT'S BLINDING! WHAT IS IT?

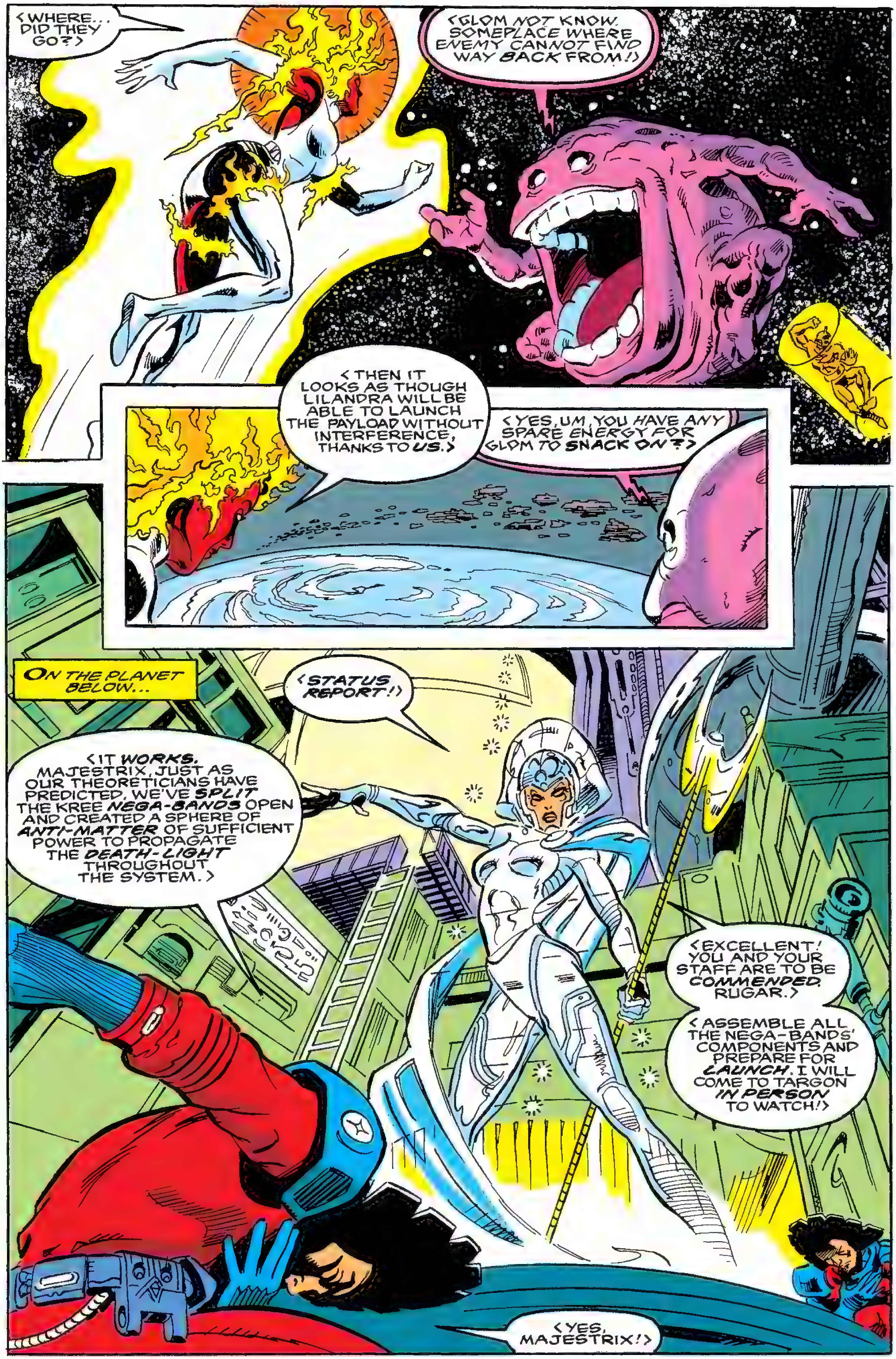

A FIGURE--A *WOMAN!* OH, NO--ANOTHER OF THOSE *IMPERIAL GUARD* PERSONS?!?
HEY, ATLAS--*YOU* RECOGNIZE HER?
NO.
WELL, SHE'S APPROACHING WITH HER *SUNBEAMS* TURNED WAY UP. MAYBE IT'S HER WAY TO SAY *HI.*
I'LL SHOW HER WHAT I THINK OF PEOPLE WITH MESSY *ENERGY DISCHARGES--*
--BY VACUUMING IT UP AND FUNNELING IT *AWAY* FROM ME!
SHE TOOK THE *HINT.* SHE'S DIMMED HER *CORONA* BY A FACTOR OF A *100.*
GO NO FURTHER OR YOU'LL HAVE TO *ANSWER* TO ME!
AND WHO ARE *YOU?*
I AM... *BINARY.*
WELL, MA'AM, AS MUCH AS I LIKED THE DRAMATIC WAY YOU PAUSED BEFORE SAYING YOUR *NAME,* I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CONSIDER YOU A *THREAT* TO ME AND MY MISSION.
CALL ME AN OVERREACTOR, BUT SOMETHING IN YOUR *ENERGY BARRAGE* AND THE *TONE* OF YOUR WORDS MADE A *LITTLE VOICE* GO OFF IN MY HEAD SAYING, "THIS LADY MIGHT BE TROUBLE. SHE'D BE SAFER IN A BUBBLE."

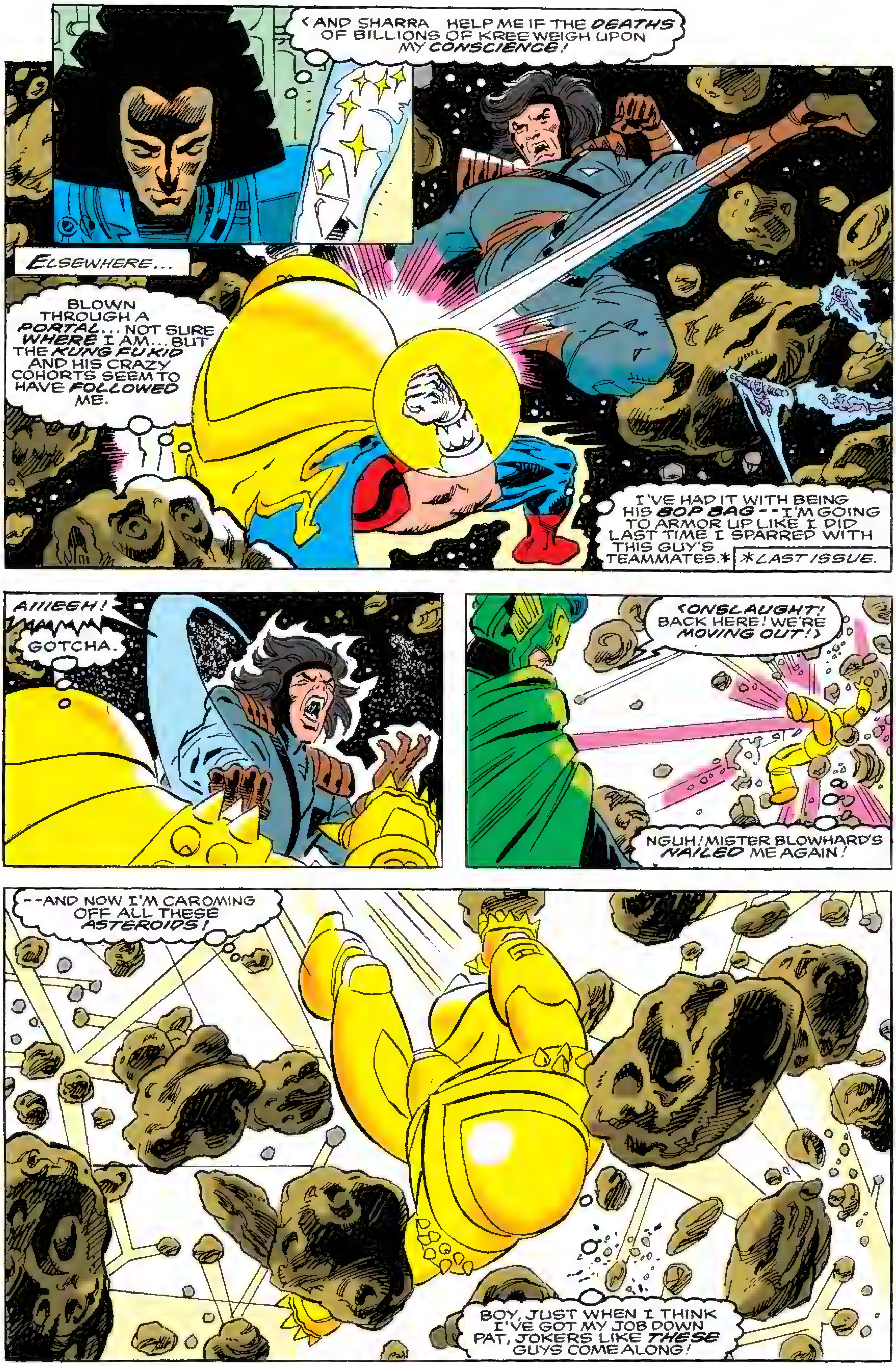

NO... I DIDN'T *THINK* SHE'D LIKE THAT VERY MUCH.
STOP THAT SO I CAN *TALK* TO YOU!
THAT'S *BETTER*.
SO WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA *ATTACKING* ME, LADY?
I WAS SIMPLY TRYING TO GET YOUR *ATTENTION--*
YEAH, RIGHT.
--SO I COULD TELL YOU THAT YOUR INTERFERENCE MAY COST THE EMPIRE *COUNTLESS LIVES.*
WHAT INTERFERENCE? HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO I *AM* OR WHAT I'M *DOING* HERE? YOU ONE OF THE *IMPERIAL GUARD?*
NO, I'M WITH THE *STARJAMMERS.*
STARJAMMERS--*NEVER* HEARD OF 'EM. WELL, I'D LIKE TO STAY AND CHAT BUT I'VE GOT SOME *NEGA-BANDS* TO FIND.
I'LL SEE ABOUT LETTING YOU *OUT* OF THERE WHEN I GET--
WHAT--?!?

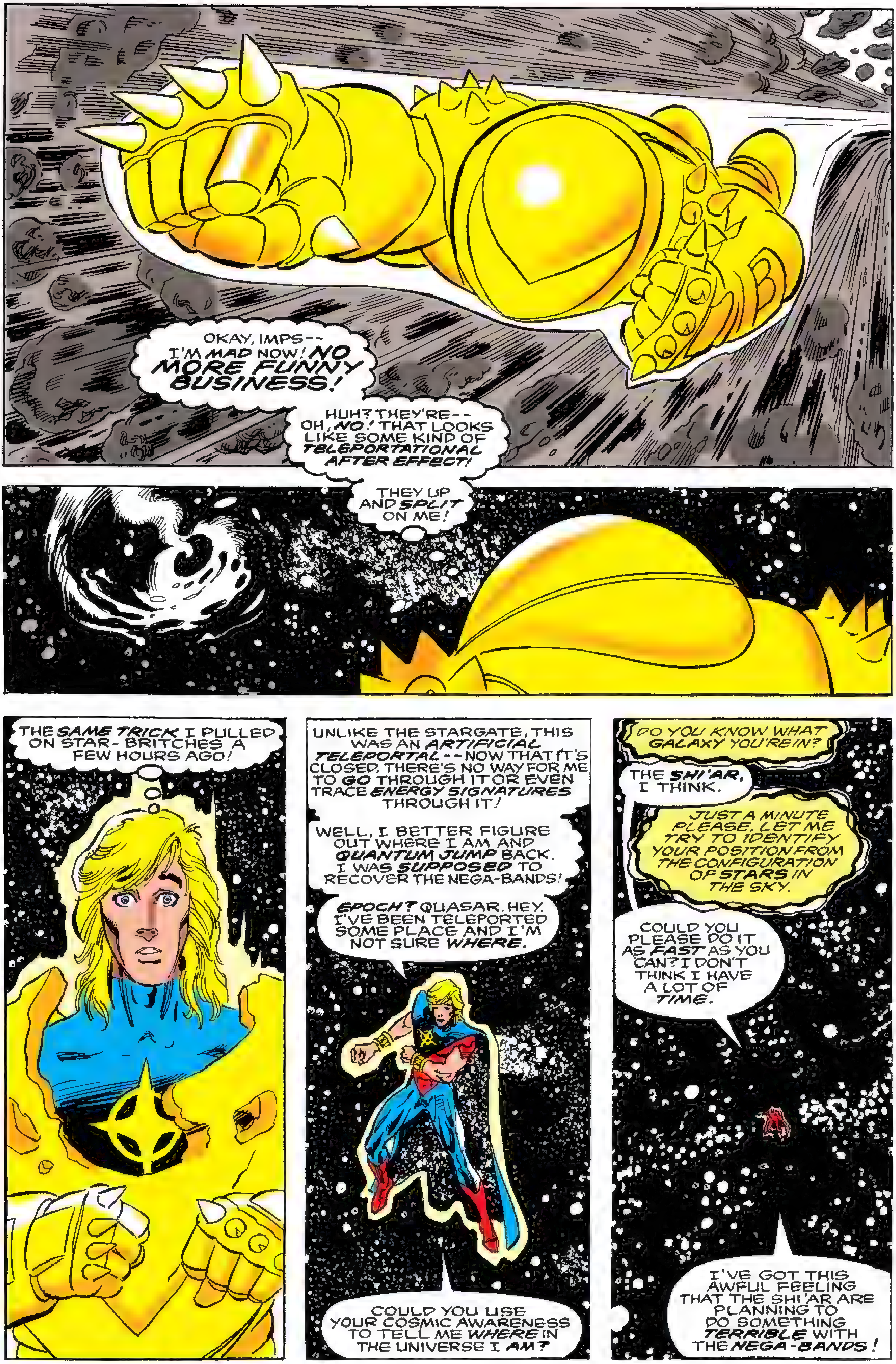

NNNNGH! NEVER SAW IT COMING!
BUT HOW--? COULD ANYONE HAVE GOTTEN SO CLOSE TO ME WITHOUT DETECTION--?
IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY QUANTUM AURA, THAT PUNCH WOULD HAVE TAKEN MY HEAD OFF!
<A MASTERFUL BLOW AS USUAL, ONSLAUGHT.>
<NOW HOVER ASIDE--IT IS MY TURN!>
EXCELLENT, MOONDANCER-- YOU GUIDED US RIGHT TO HIM!>
<WAIT FOR GLOM-- GLOM NOT THROUGH YET!>

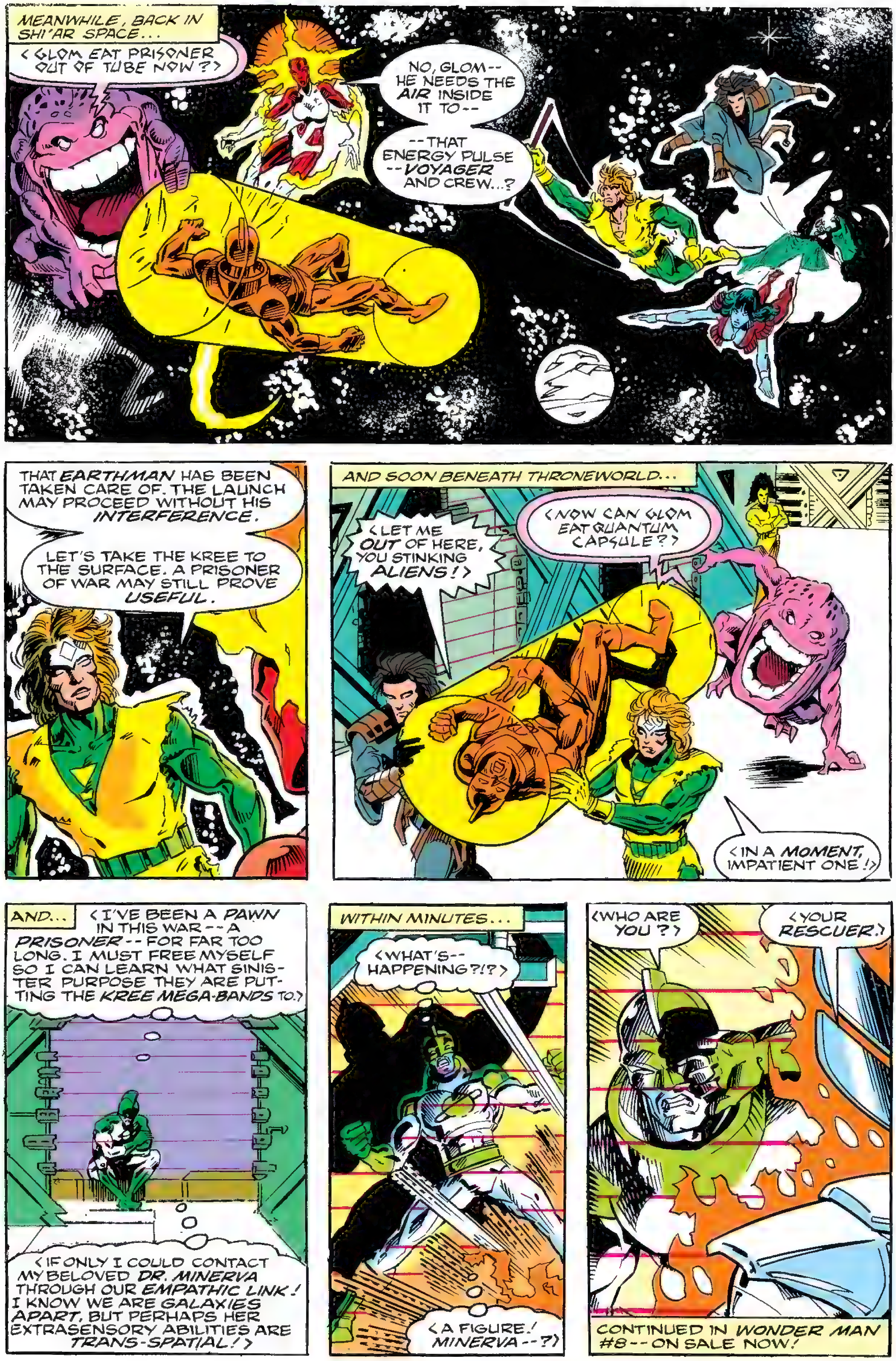

<FEEL THE FURY OF THE SOLAR WIND!>
<GLOM SEES BALL OF ENERGY-- GLOM HUNGRY!>
MORE IMPERIAL GUARDS? OR ARE THEY STARJAMMERS? THE SHI'AR SEEM TO BOAST ALMOST AS MANY SUPER-CHAMPIONS AS EARTH DOES!


<GLOM EAT YOUR **BUBBLE**, FIRE-TOP FEMINOID!>
WHOUFF! BEING BUFFETED ABOUT SO HARD, I HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT WHAT KIND OF **DEFENSE** TO WHIP UP YET!
<KEEP HIM OCCUPIED, ONSLAUGHT! **VOYAGER** IS ALMOST IN POSITION!>
IF THESE GUYS WERE HITTING ME WITH **ENERGY** LIKE **BINARY** DID, THEY'D BE **EASY** TO DEAL WITH--
UH-OH, I SENSE SOMETHING ENERGETIC BEHIND ME--!
<GOOD WORK, **SOLAR WIND!** RIGHT **THROUGH** THE PORTAL!>
<FOLLOW **ME**, GUARDSMEN!>


<WHERE... DID THEY GO?>
<GLOM NOT KNOW. SOMEPLACE WHERE ENEMY CANNOT FIND WAY BACK FROM!>
<THEN IT LOOKS AS THOUGH LILANDRA WILL BE ABLE TO LAUNCH THE PAYLOAD WITHOUT INTERFERENCE, THANKS TO US.>
<YES, UM, YOU HAVE ANY SPARE ENERGY FOR GLOM TO SNACK ON?>
ON THE PLANET BELOW...
<STATUS REPORT!>
<IT WORKS, MAJESTRIX. JUST AS OUR THEORETICIANS HAVE PREDICTED, WE'VE SPLIT THE KREE NEGA-BANDS OPEN AND CREATED A SPHERE OF ANTI-MATTER OF SUFFICIENT POWER TO PROPAGATE THE DEATH-LIGHT THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM.>
<EXCELLENT! YOU AND YOUR STAFF ARE TO BE COMMENDED, RUGAR.>
<ASSEMBLE ALL THE NEGA-BANDS' COMPONENTS AND PREPARE FOR LAUNCH. I WILL COME TO TARGON IN PERSON TO WATCH!>
<YES, MAJESTRIX!>


<AND SHARRA HELP ME IF THE *DEATHS* OF BILLIONS OF KREE WEIGH UPON MY *CONSCIENCE!*
ELSEWHERE...
BLOWN THROUGH A *PORTAL*... NOT SURE *WHERE* I AM... BUT THE *KUNG FU KID* AND HIS CRAZY COHORTS SEEM TO HAVE *FOLLOWED* ME.
I'VE HAD IT WITH BEING HIS *BOP BAG*--I'M GOING TO ARMOR UP LIKE I DID LAST TIME I SPARRED WITH THIS GUY'S TEAMMATES.*
**LAST ISSUE.*
AIIIEEH!
GOTCHA.
<*ONSLAUGHT!* BACK HERE! WE'RE *MOVING OUT!*>
NGUH! MISTER BLOWHARD'S *NAILED* ME AGAIN!
--AND NOW I'M CAROMING OFF ALL THESE *ASTEROIDS!*
BOY, JUST WHEN I THINK I'VE GOT MY JOB DOWN PAT, JOKERS LIKE *THESE* GUYS COME ALONG!


OKAY, IMPS-- I'M MAD NOW! NO MORE FUNNY BUSINESS!
HUH? THEY'RE-- OH, NO! THAT LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF TELEPORTATIONAL AFTER EFFECT!
THEY UP AND SPLIT ON ME!
THE SAME TRICK I PULLED ON STAR-BRITCHES A FEW HOURS AGO!
UNLIKE THE STARGATE, THIS WAS AN ARTIFICIAL TELEPORTAL--NOW THAT IT'S CLOSED, THERE'S NO WAY FOR ME TO GO THROUGH IT OR EVEN TRACE ENERGY SIGNATURES THROUGH IT!
WELL, I BETTER FIGURE OUT WHERE I AM AND QUANTUM JUMP BACK. I WAS SUPPOSED TO RECOVER THE NEGA-BANDS!
EPOCH? QUASAR, HEY. I'VE BEEN TELEPORTED SOME PLACE AND I'M NOT SURE WHERE.
COULD YOU USE YOUR COSMIC AWARENESS TO TELL ME WHERE IN THE UNIVERSE I AM?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT GALAXY YOU'RE IN?
THE SHI'AR, I THINK.
JUST A MINUTE PLEASE. LET ME TRY TO IDENTIFY YOUR POSITION FROM THE CONFIGURATION OF STARS IN THE SKY.
COULD YOU PLEASE DO IT AS FAST AS YOU CAN? I DON'T THINK I HAVE A LOT OF TIME.
I'VE GOT THIS AWFUL FEELING THAT THE SHI'AR ARE PLANNING TO DO SOMETHING TERRIBLE WITH THE NEGA-BANDS!


MEANWHILE, BACK IN SHI'AR SPACE...
<GLOM EAT PRISONER OUT OF TUBE NOW?>
NO, GLOM-- HE NEEDS THE *AIR* INSIDE IT TO--
--THAT ENERGY PULSE --*VOYAGER* AND CREW...?
THAT *EARTHMAN* HAS BEEN TAKEN CARE OF. THE LAUNCH MAY PROCEED WITHOUT HIS *INTERFERENCE*.
LET'S TAKE THE KREE TO THE SURFACE. A PRISONER OF WAR MAY STILL PROVE *USEFUL*.
AND SOON BENEATH THRONEWORLD...
<LET ME *OUT* OF HERE, YOU STINKING *ALIENS*!>
<NOW CAN GLOM EAT QUANTUM CAPSULE?>
<IN A *MOMENT*, IMPATIENT ONE!>
AND...
<I'VE BEEN A *PAWN* IN THIS WAR--A *PRISONER*--FOR FAR TOO LONG. I MUST FREE MYSELF SO I CAN LEARN WHAT SINISTER PURPOSE THEY ARE PUTTING THE *KREE MEGA-BANDS* TO.>
<IF ONLY I COULD CONTACT MY BELOVED *DR. MINERVA* THROUGH OUR *EMPATHIC LINK*! I KNOW WE ARE *GALAXIES APART*, BUT PERHAPS HER EXTRASENSORY ABILITIES ARE *TRANS-SPATIAL*!>
WITHIN MINUTES...
<WHAT'S-- HAPPENING?!?>
<A FIGURE! *MINERVA*--?>
<WHO ARE *YOU*?>
<YOUR *RESCUER*.>
CONTINUED IN *WONDER MAN* #8--ON SALE NOW!

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OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 11
WONDER MAN™
JOHNSON & AUSTIN
Divisions
STARJAMMIN'!

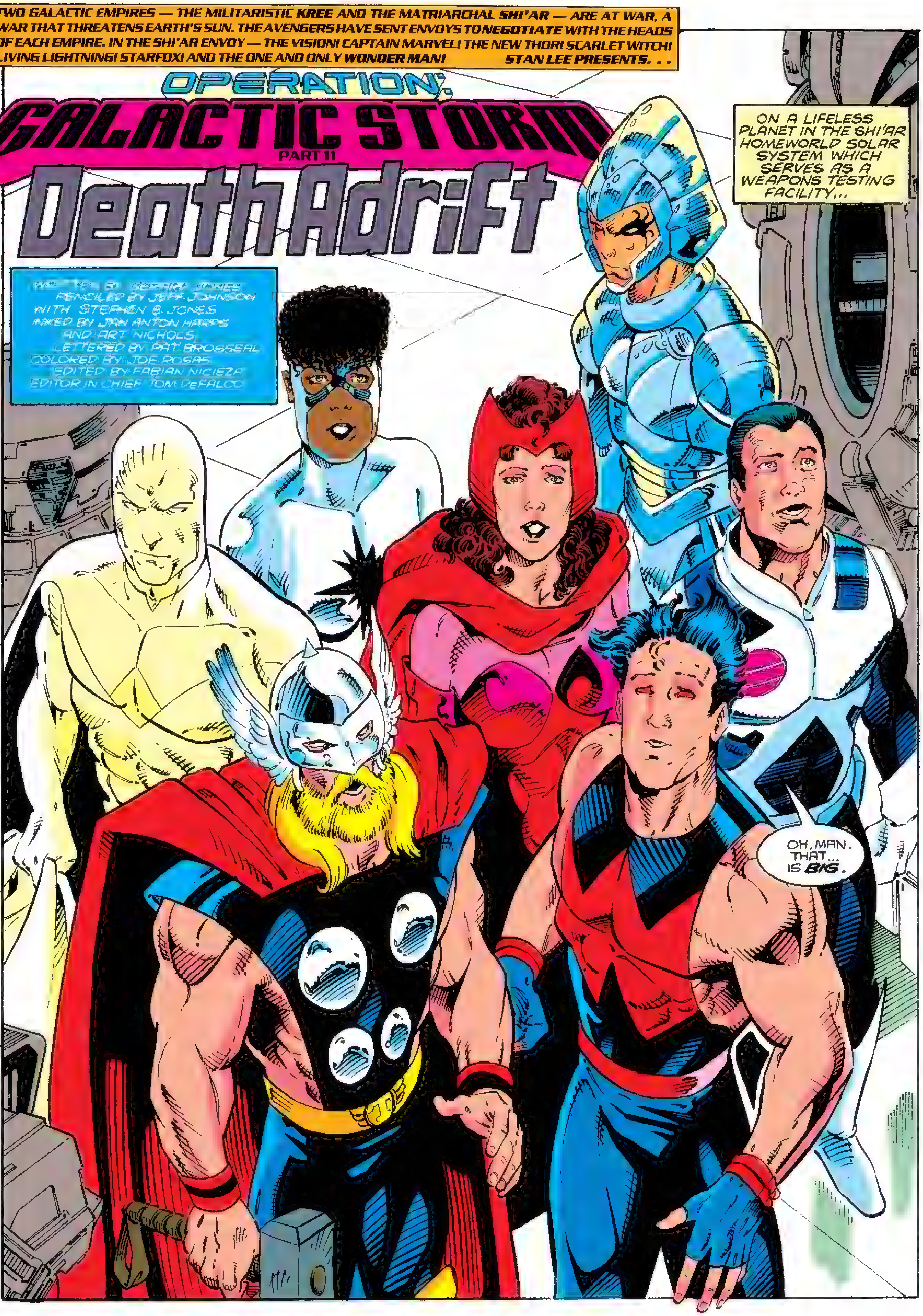
TWO GALACTIC EMPIRES — THE MILITARISTIC **KREE** AND THE MATRIARCHAL **SHI'AR** — ARE AT WAR, A WAR THAT THREATENS EARTH'S SUN. THE AVENGERS HAVE SENT ENVOYS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE HEADS OF EACH EMPIRE. IN THE SHI'AR ENVOY — THE VISION! CAPTAIN MARVEL! THE NEW THOR! SCARLET WITCH! LIVING LIGHTNING! STARFOX! AND THE ONE AND ONLY **WONDER MAN!** STAN LEE PRESENTS. . .

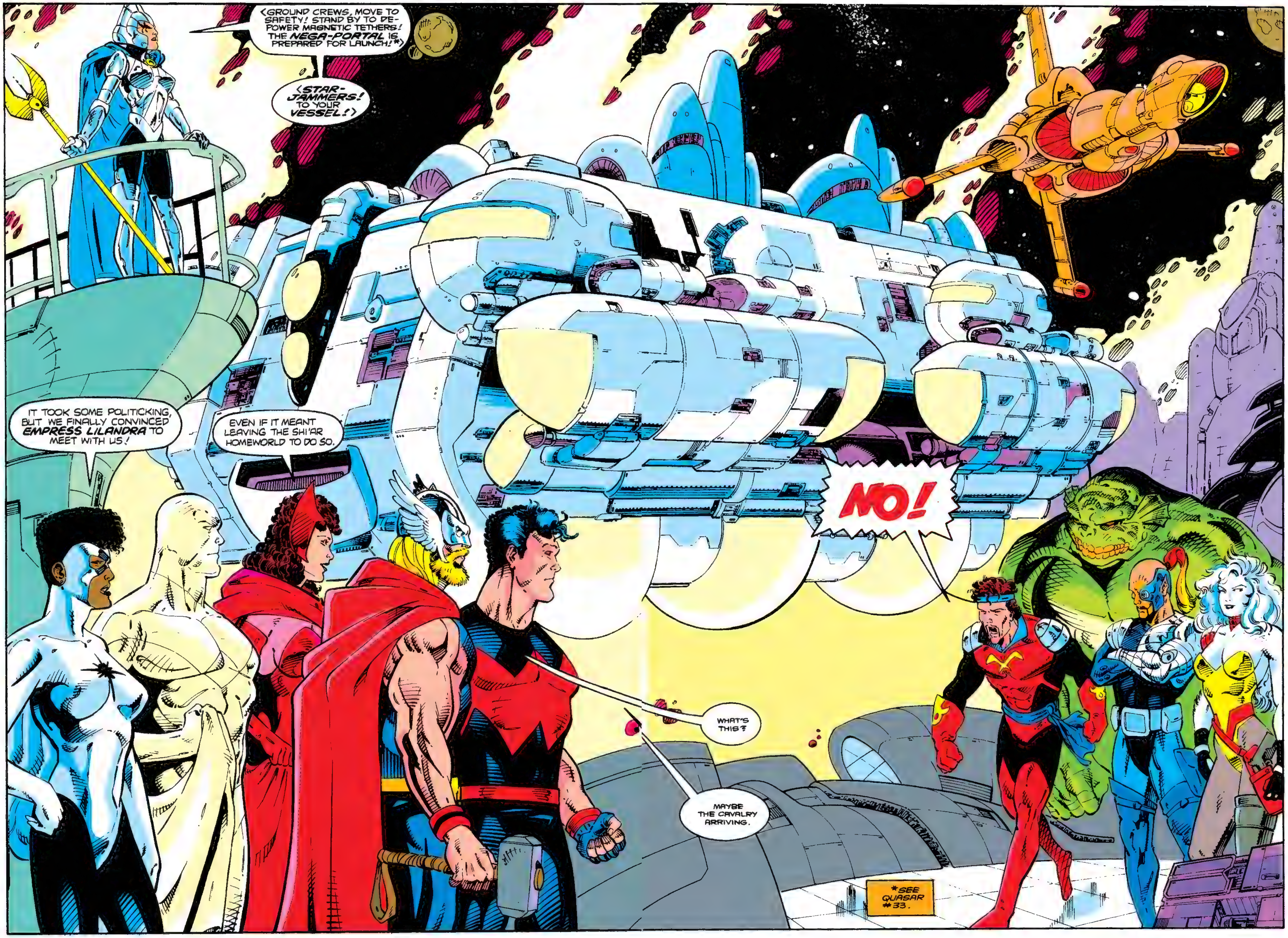
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

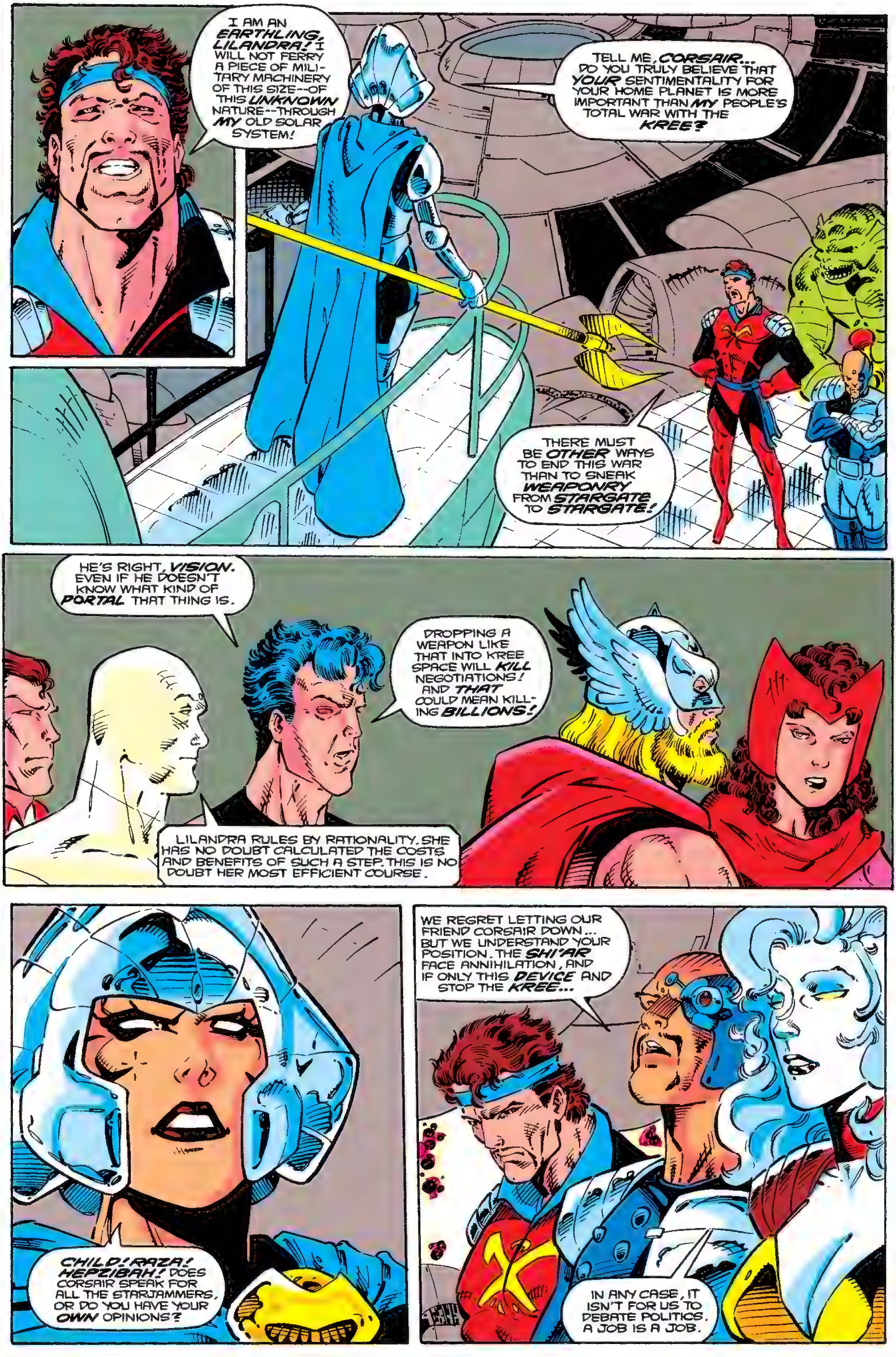
PART 11

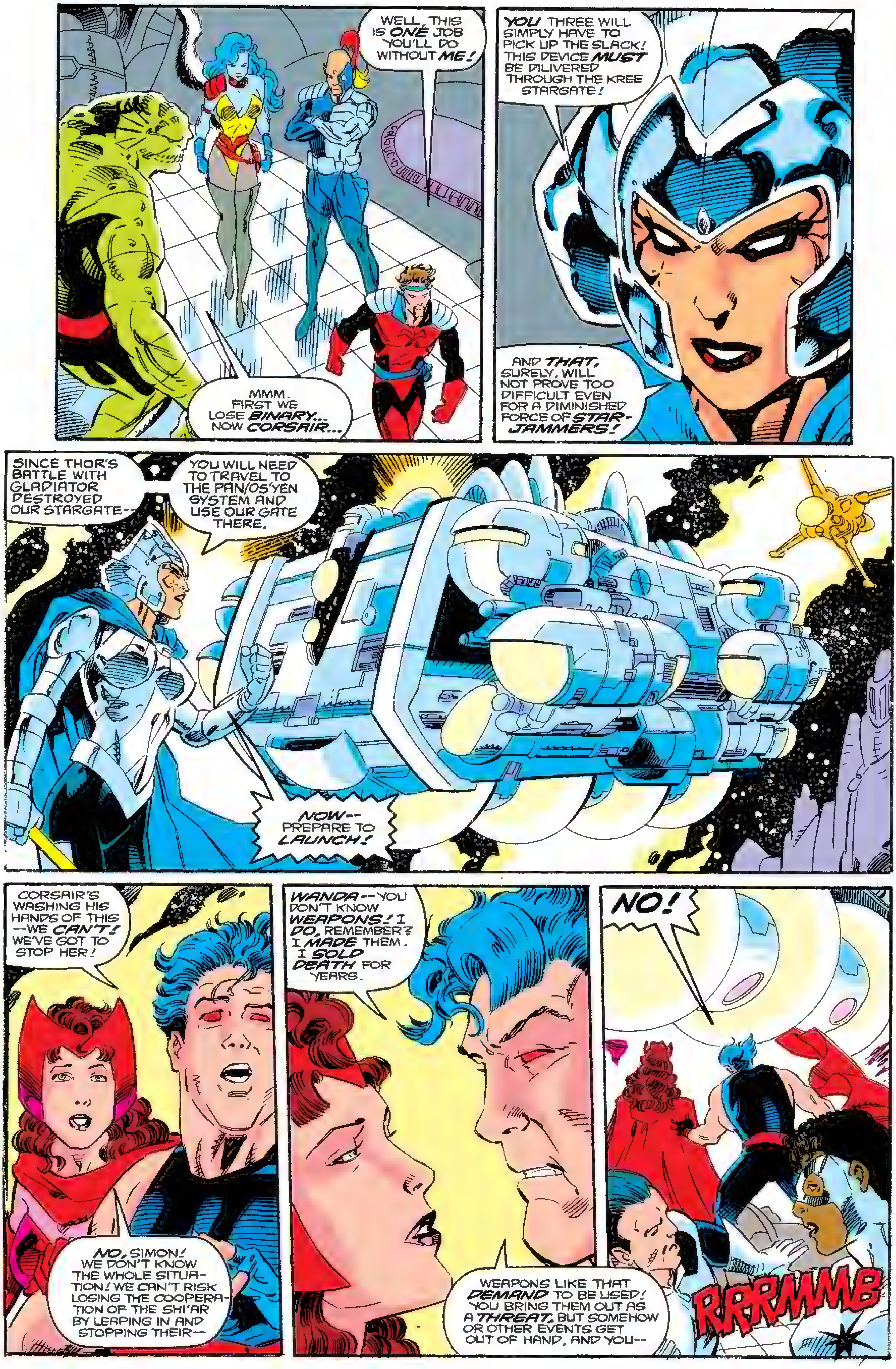
Death Adrift

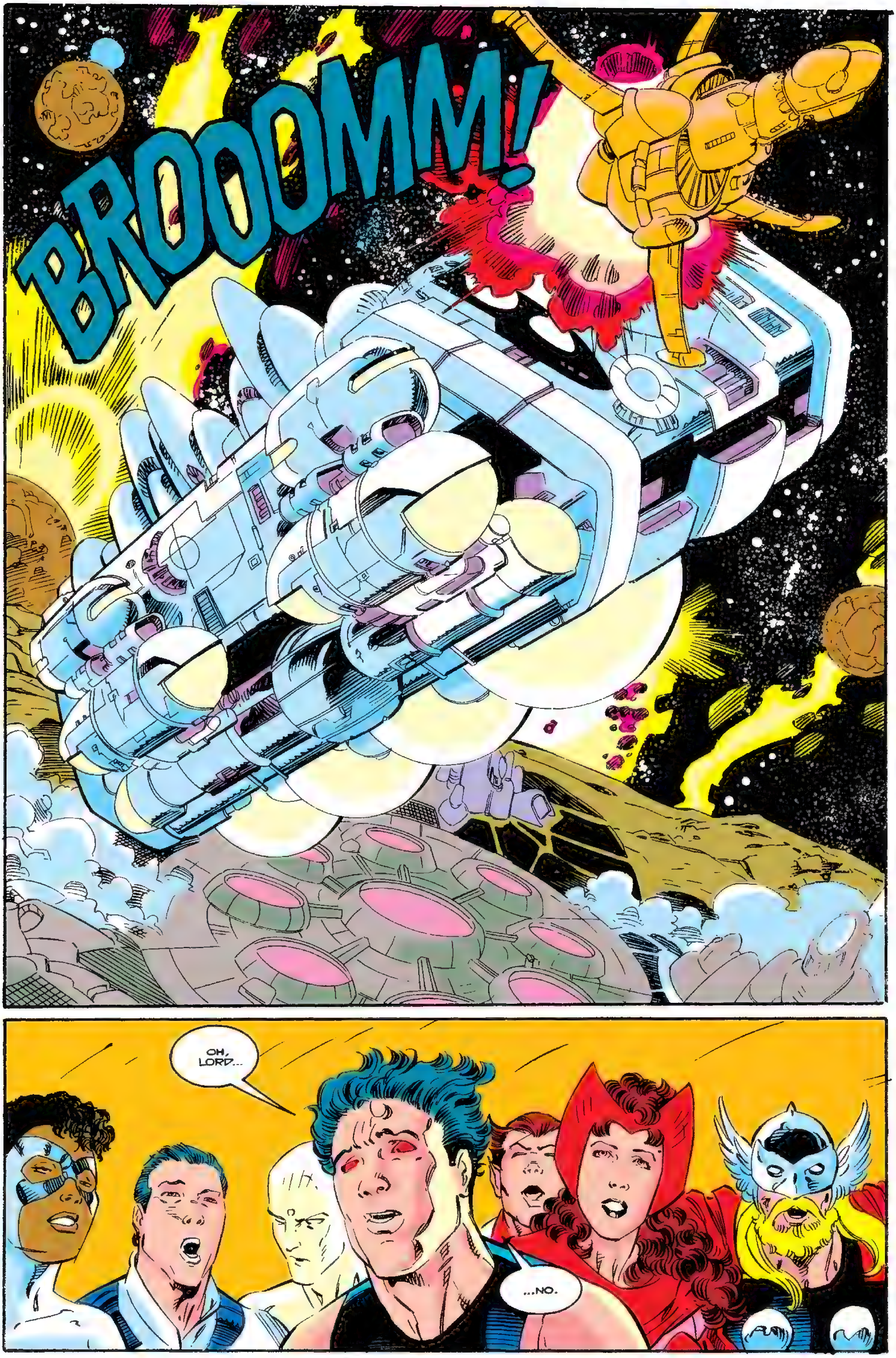
WRITTEN BY GERARD JONES
PENCILED BY JEFF JOHNSON
WITH STEPHEN B. JONES
INKED BY JAN ANTON HARRIS
AND ART NICHOLS
LETTERED BY PAT BROSSEAU
COLORED BY JOE ROSAS
EDITED BY FABIAN NICIEZA
EDITOR IN CHIEF TOM DEFALCO

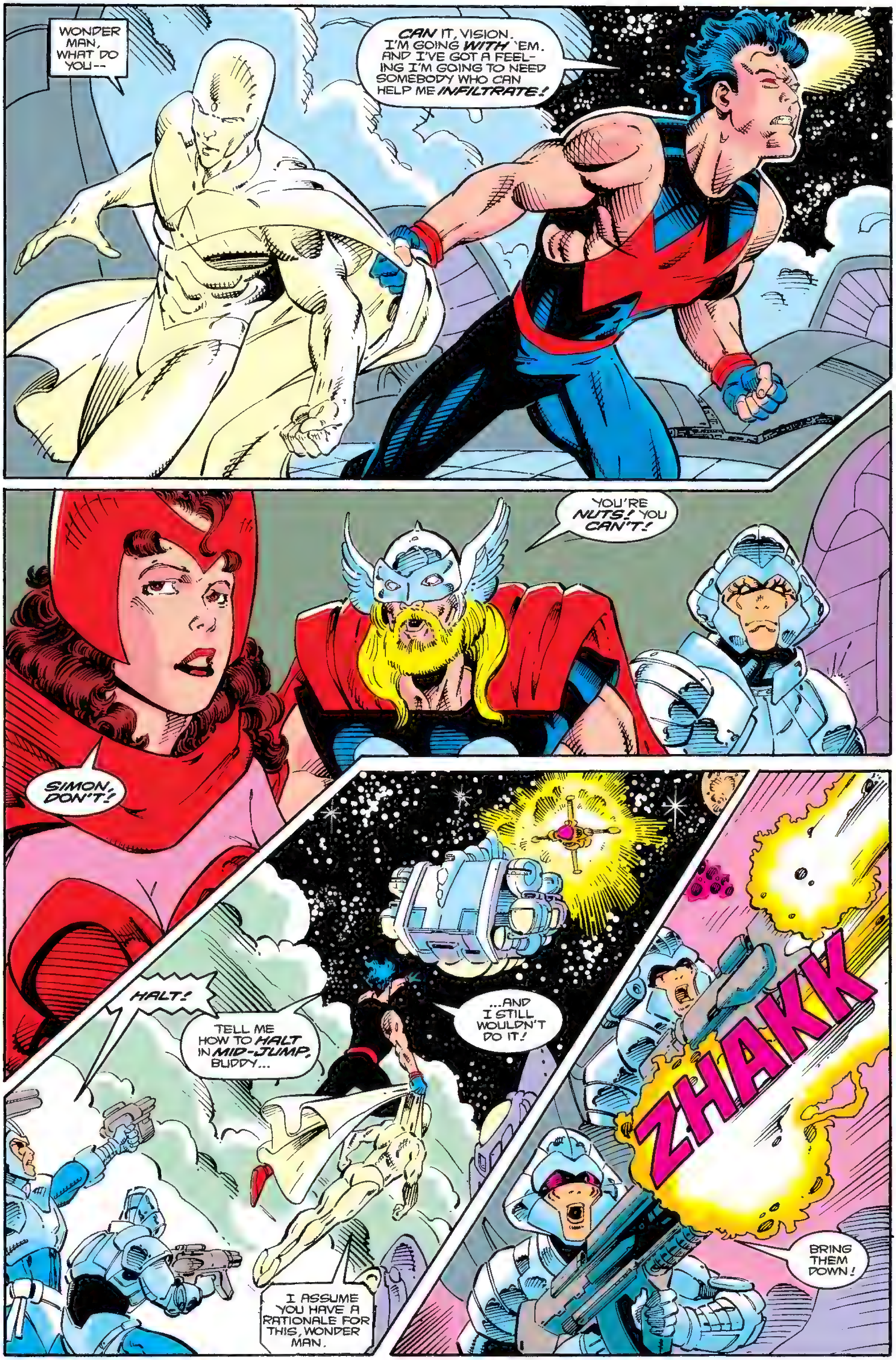

ON A LIFELESS PLANET IN THE SHI'AR HOMEWORLD SOLAR SYSTEM WHICH SERVES AS A WEAPONS TESTING FACILITY...
OH, MAN. THAT... IS **BIG**.

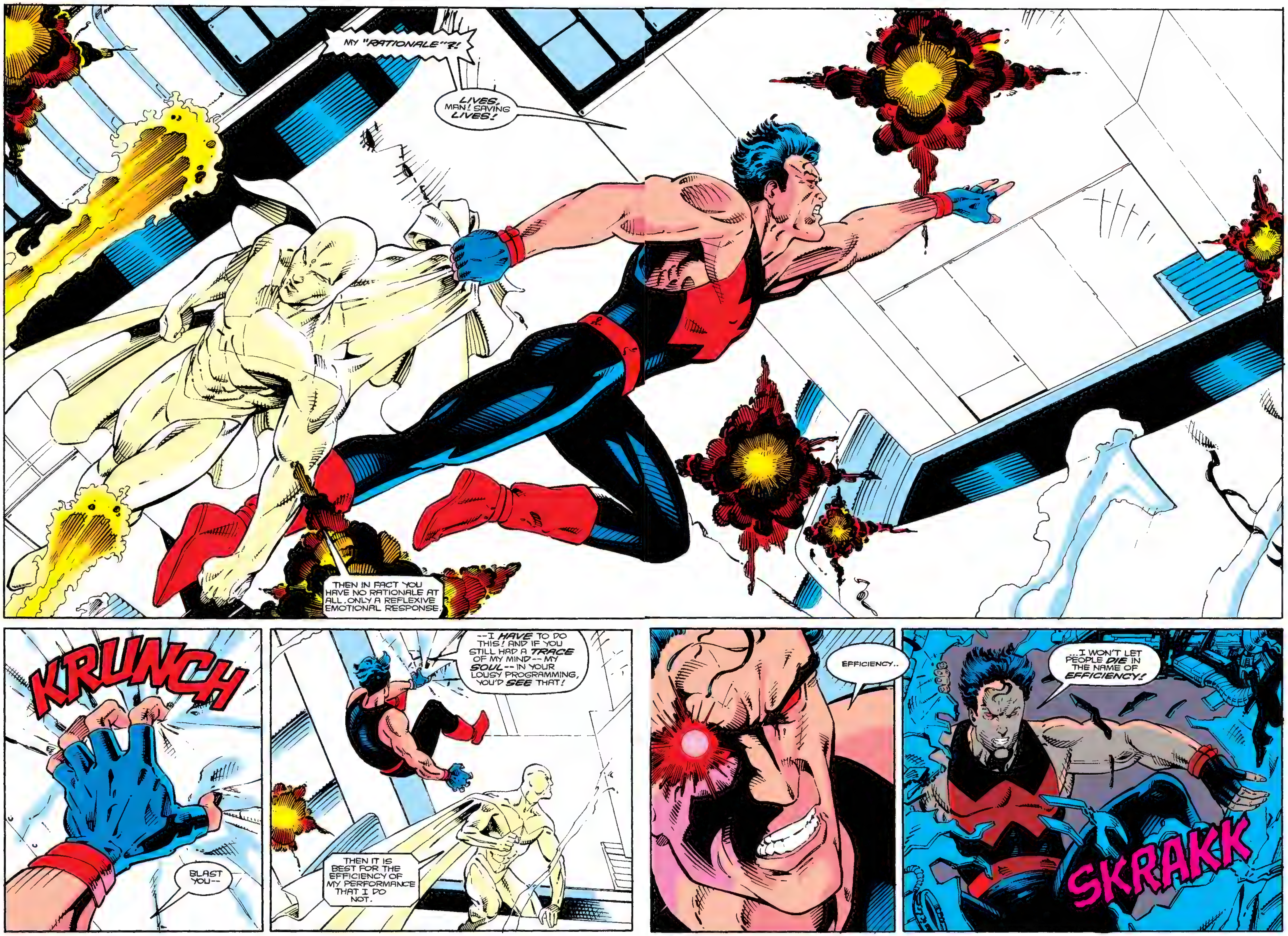

‹GROUND CREWS, MOVE TO SAFETY! STAND BY TO DE-POWER MAGNETIC TETHERS! THE **NEGA-PORTAL** IS PREPARED FOR LAUNCH!*›
‹**STAR-JAMMERS!** TO YOUR **VESSEL!**›
IT TOOK SOME POLITICKING, BUT WE FINALLY CONVINCED **EMPRESS LILANDRA** TO MEET WITH US!
EVEN IF IT MEANT LEAVING THE SHI'AR HOMEWORLD TO DO SO.
NO!
WHAT'S THIS?
MAYBE THE CAVALRY ARRIVING.
*SEE QUASAR #33.

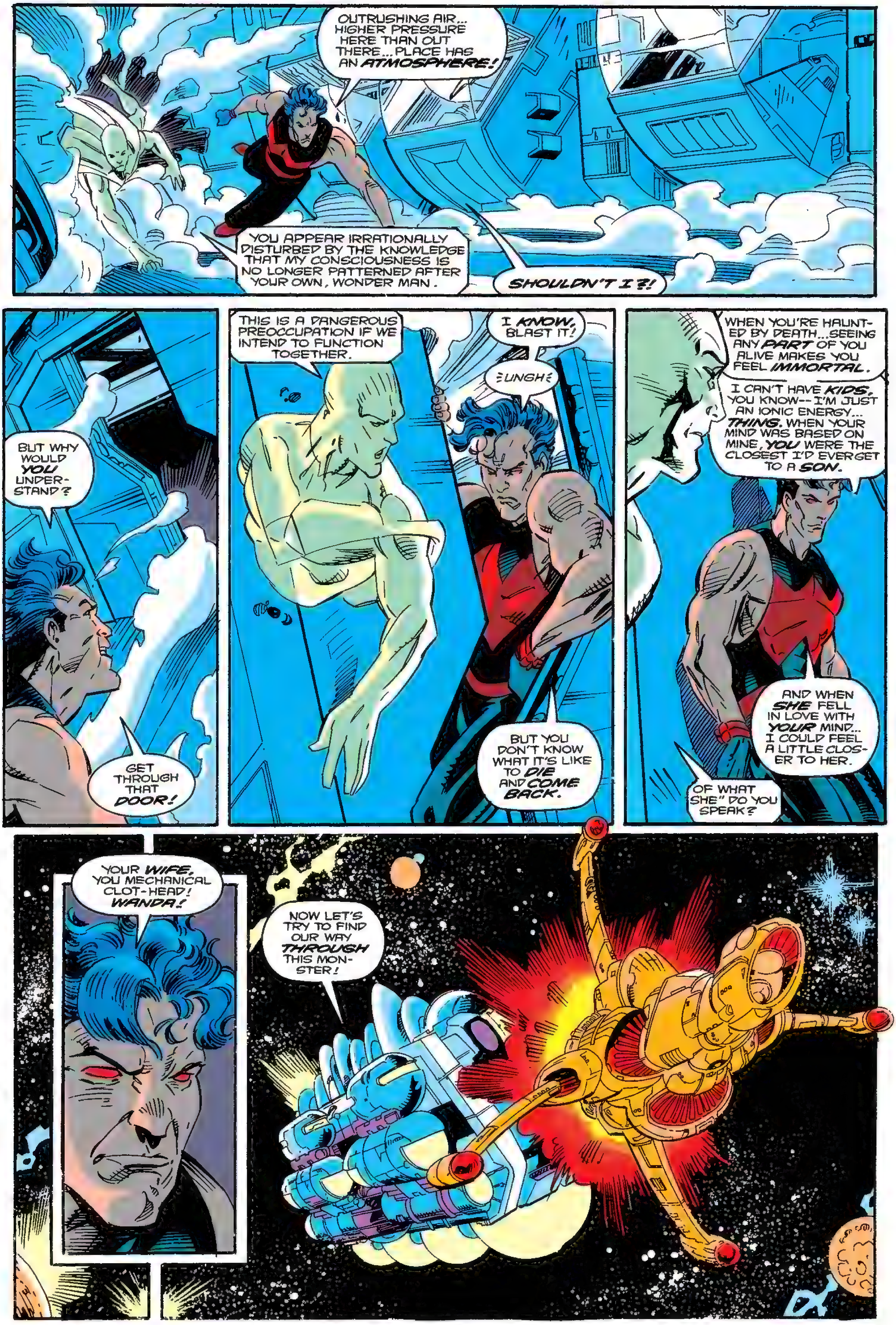

I AM AN EARTHLING, LILANDRA! I WILL NOT FERRY A PIECE OF MILITARY MACHINERY OF THIS SIZE--OF THIS UNKNOWN NATURE--THROUGH MY OLD SOLAR SYSTEM!
TELL ME, CORSAIR... DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE THAT YOUR SENTIMENTALITY FOR YOUR HOME PLANET IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY PEOPLE'S TOTAL WAR WITH THE KREE?
THERE MUST BE OTHER WAYS TO END THIS WAR THAN TO SNEAK WEAPONRY FROM STARGATE TO STARGATE!
HE'S RIGHT, VISION. EVEN IF HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF PORTAL THAT THING IS.
DROPPING A WEAPON LIKE THAT INTO KREE SPACE WILL KILL NEGOTIATIONS! AND THAT COULD MEAN KILLING BILLIONS!
LILANDRA RULES BY RATIONALITY. SHE HAS NO DOUBT CALCULATED THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF SUCH A STEP. THIS IS NO DOUBT HER MOST EFFICIENT COURSE.
CHILD! RAZA! HEPZIBAH! DOES CORSAIR SPEAK FOR ALL THE STARJAMMERS, OR DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN OPINIONS?
WE REGRET LETTING OUR FRIEND CORSAIR DOWN... BUT WE UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION. THE SHI'AR FACE ANNIHILATION, AND IF ONLY THIS DEVICE AND STOP THE KREE...
IN ANY CASE, IT ISN'T FOR US TO DEBATE POLITICS. A JOB IS A JOB.

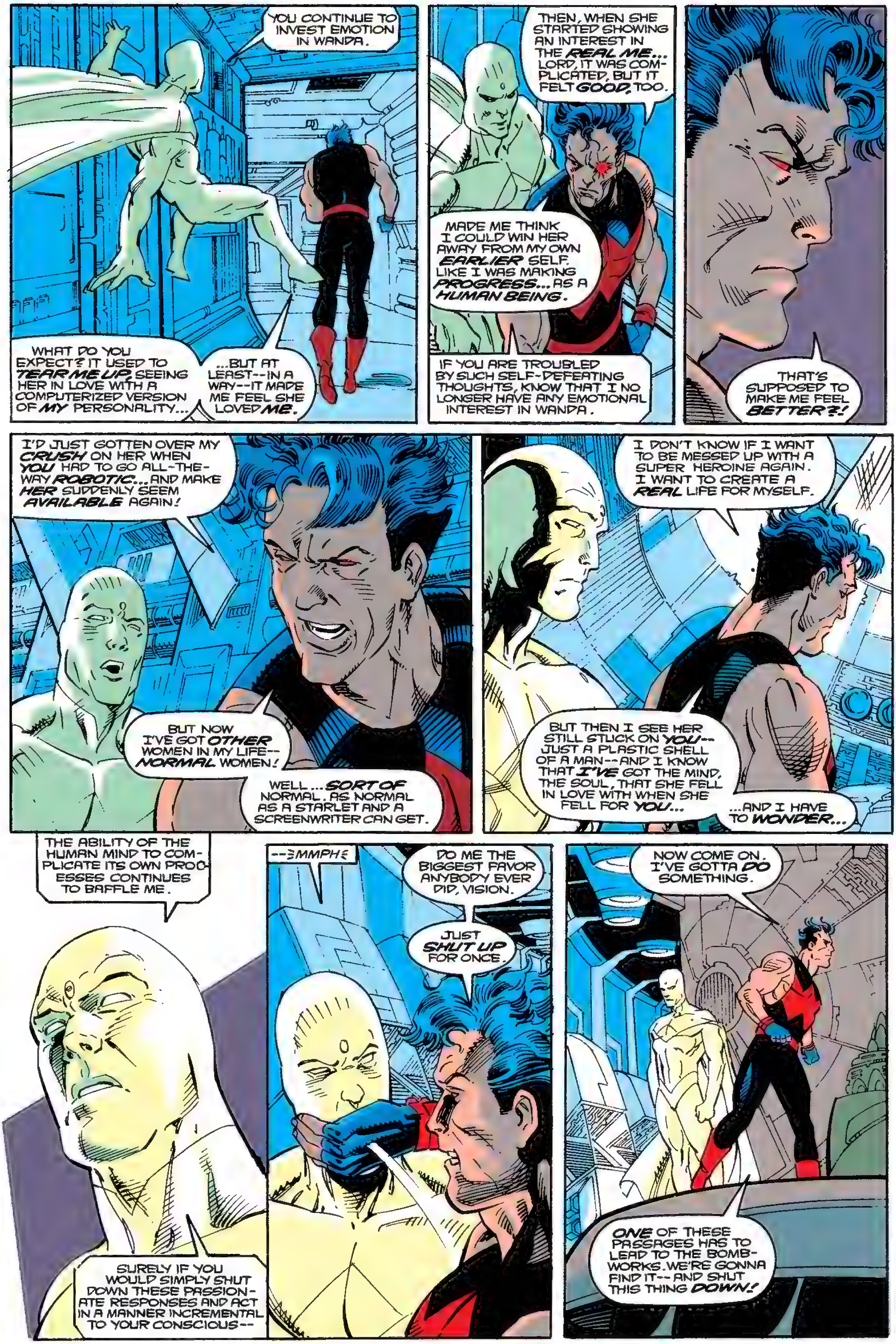

WELL, THIS IS ONE JOB YOU'LL DO WITHOUT ME!
MMM. FIRST WE LOSE BINARY... NOW CORSAIR...
YOU THREE WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO PICK UP THE SLACK! THIS DEVICE MUST BE DILIVERED THROUGH THE KREE STARGATE!
AND THAT, SURELY, WILL NOT PROVE TOO DIFFICULT EVEN FOR A DIMINISHED FORCE OF STAR-JAMMERS!
SINCE THOR'S BATTLE WITH GLADIATOR DESTROYED OUR STARGATE--
YOU WILL NEED TO TRAVEL TO THE PAN/OS'YEN SYSTEM AND USE OUR GATE THERE.
NOW-- PREPARE TO LAUNCH!
CORSAIR'S WASHING HIS HANDS OF THIS --WE CAN'T! WE'VE GOT TO STOP HER!
NO, SIMON! WE DON'T KNOW THE WHOLE SITUATION! WE CAN'T RISK LOSING THE COOPERATION OF THE SHI'AR BY LEAPING IN AND STOPPING THEIR--
WANDA--YOU DON'T KNOW WEAPONS! I DO, REMEMBER? I MADE THEM. I SOLD DEATH FOR YEARS.
WEAPONS LIKE THAT DEMAND TO BE USED! YOU BRING THEM OUT AS A THREAT, BUT SOMEHOW OR OTHER EVENTS GET OUT OF HAND, AND YOU--
NO!
RRRMMB

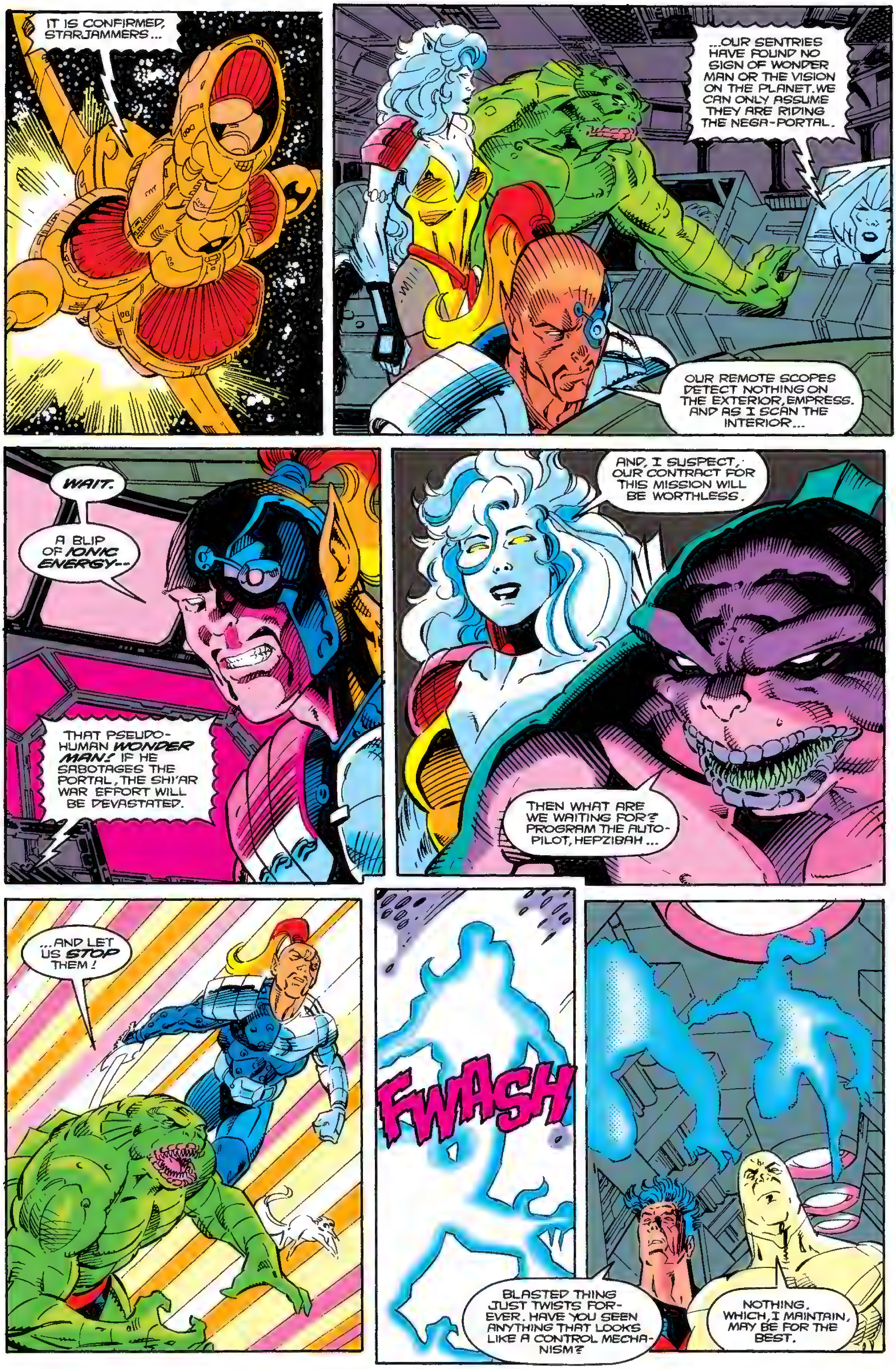

BROOOMM!
OH, LORD...
...NO.

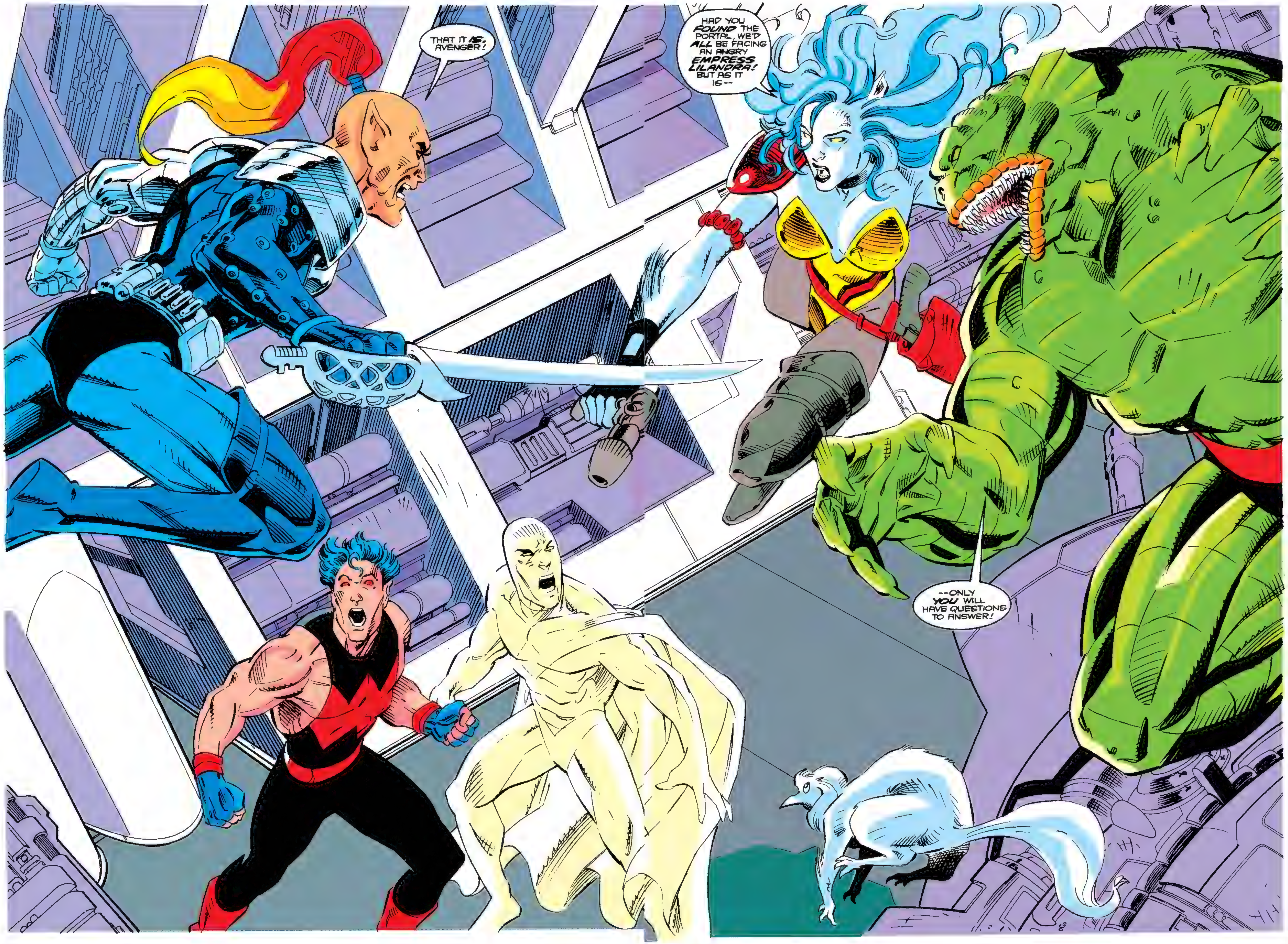

WONDER MAN, WHAT DO YOU--
CAN IT, VISION. I'M GOING *WITH* 'EM. AND I'VE GOT A FEELING I'M GOING TO NEED SOMEBODY WHO CAN HELP ME *INFILTRATE!*
YOU'RE *NUTS!* YOU *CAN'T!*
SIMON, DON'T!
HALT!
TELL ME HOW TO *HALT* IN *MID-JUMP,* BUDDY...
...AND I STILL WOULDN'T DO IT!
I ASSUME YOU HAVE A RATIONALE FOR THIS, WONDER MAN.
ZHAKK
BRING THEM DOWN!

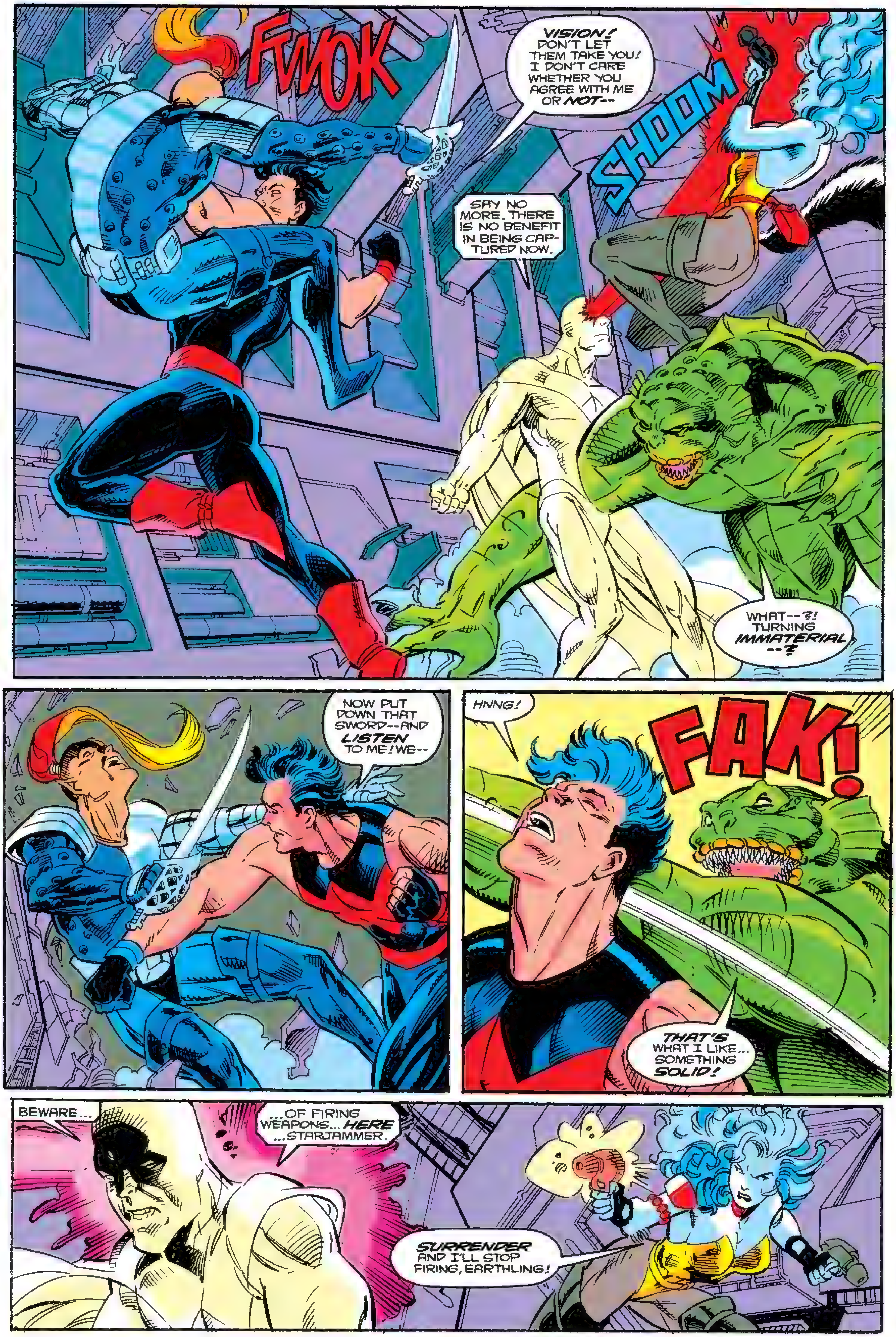

MY "RATIONALE"?!
LIVES, MAN! SAVING LIVES!
THEN IN FACT YOU HAVE NO RATIONALE AT ALL. ONLY A REFLEXIVE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE.
KRUNCH
BLAST YOU--
--I HAVE TO DO THIS! AND IF YOU STILL HAD A TRACE OF MY MIND--MY SOUL--IN YOUR LOUSY PROGRAMMING, YOU'D SEE THAT!
THEN IT IS BEST FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF MY PERFORMANCE THAT I DO NOT.
EFFICIENCY..
...I WON'T LET PEOPLE DIE IN THE NAME OF EFFICIENCY!
SKRAKK

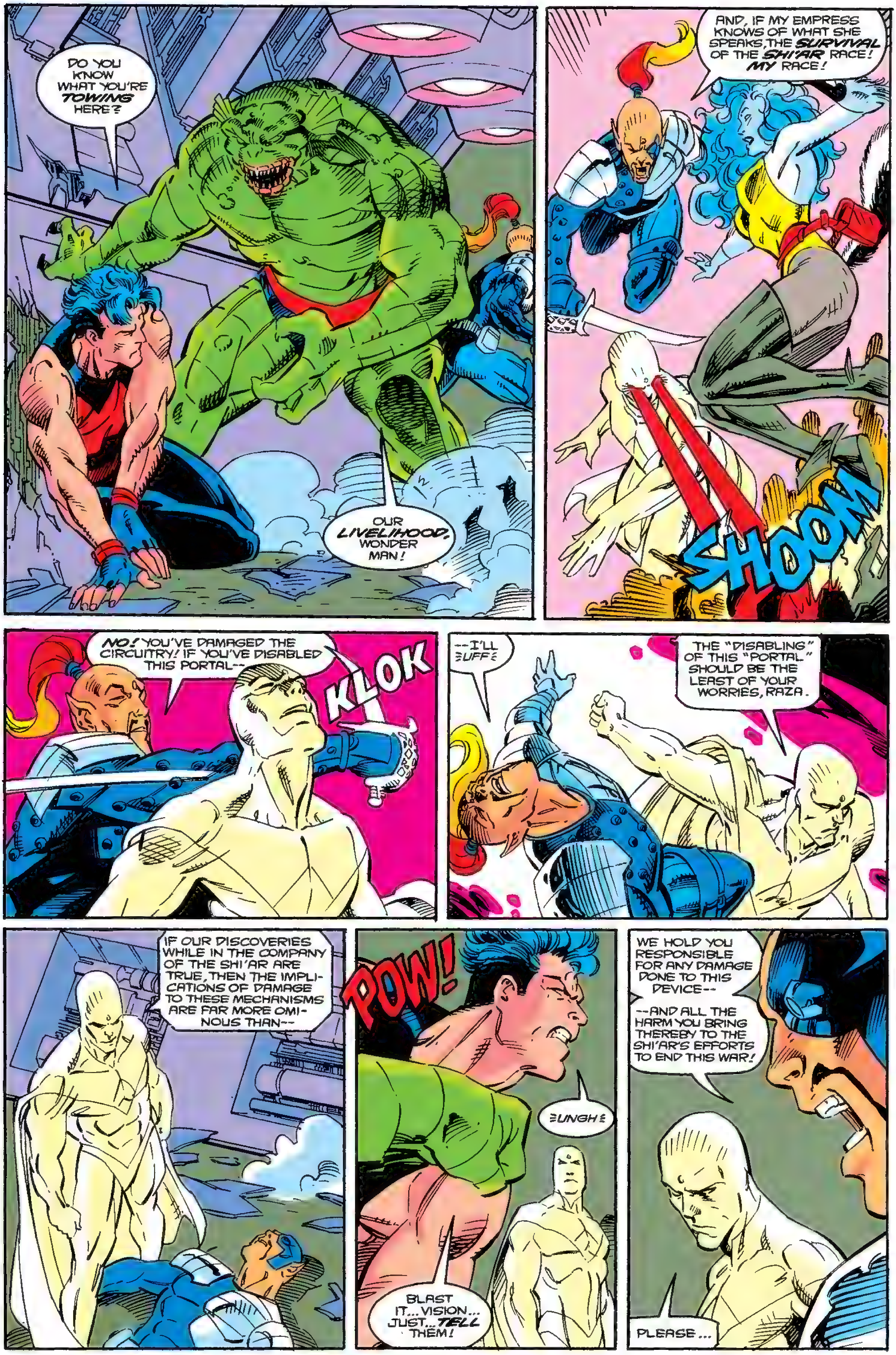

OUTRUSHING AIR... HIGHER PRESSURE HERE THAN OUT THERE... PLACE HAS AN *ATMOSPHERE!*
YOU APPEAR IRRATIONALLY DISTURBED BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT MY CONSCIOUSNESS IS NO LONGER PATTERNED AFTER YOUR OWN, WONDER MAN.
SHOULDN'T I?!
BUT WHY WOULD *YOU* UNDERSTAND?
GET THROUGH THAT *DOOR!*
THIS IS A DANGEROUS PREOCCUPATION IF WE INTEND TO FUNCTION TOGETHER.
I *KNOW,* BLAST IT!
UNGH
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO *DIE* AND *COME BACK.*
WHEN YOU'RE HAUNTED BY DEATH...SEEING ANY *PART* OF YOU ALIVE MAKES YOU FEEL *IMMORTAL.*
I CAN'T HAVE *KIDS,* YOU KNOW-- I'M JUST AN IONIC ENERGY... *THING.* WHEN YOUR MIND WAS BASED ON MINE, *YOU* WERE THE CLOSEST I'D EVER GET TO A *SON.*
AND WHEN *SHE* FELL IN LOVE WITH *YOUR* MIND... I COULD FEEL A LITTLE CLOSER TO HER.
OF WHAT SHE" DO YOU SPEAK?
YOUR *WIFE,* YOU MECHANICAL CLOT-HEAD! *WANDA!*
NOW LET'S TRY TO FIND OUR WAY *THROUGH* THIS MONSTER!

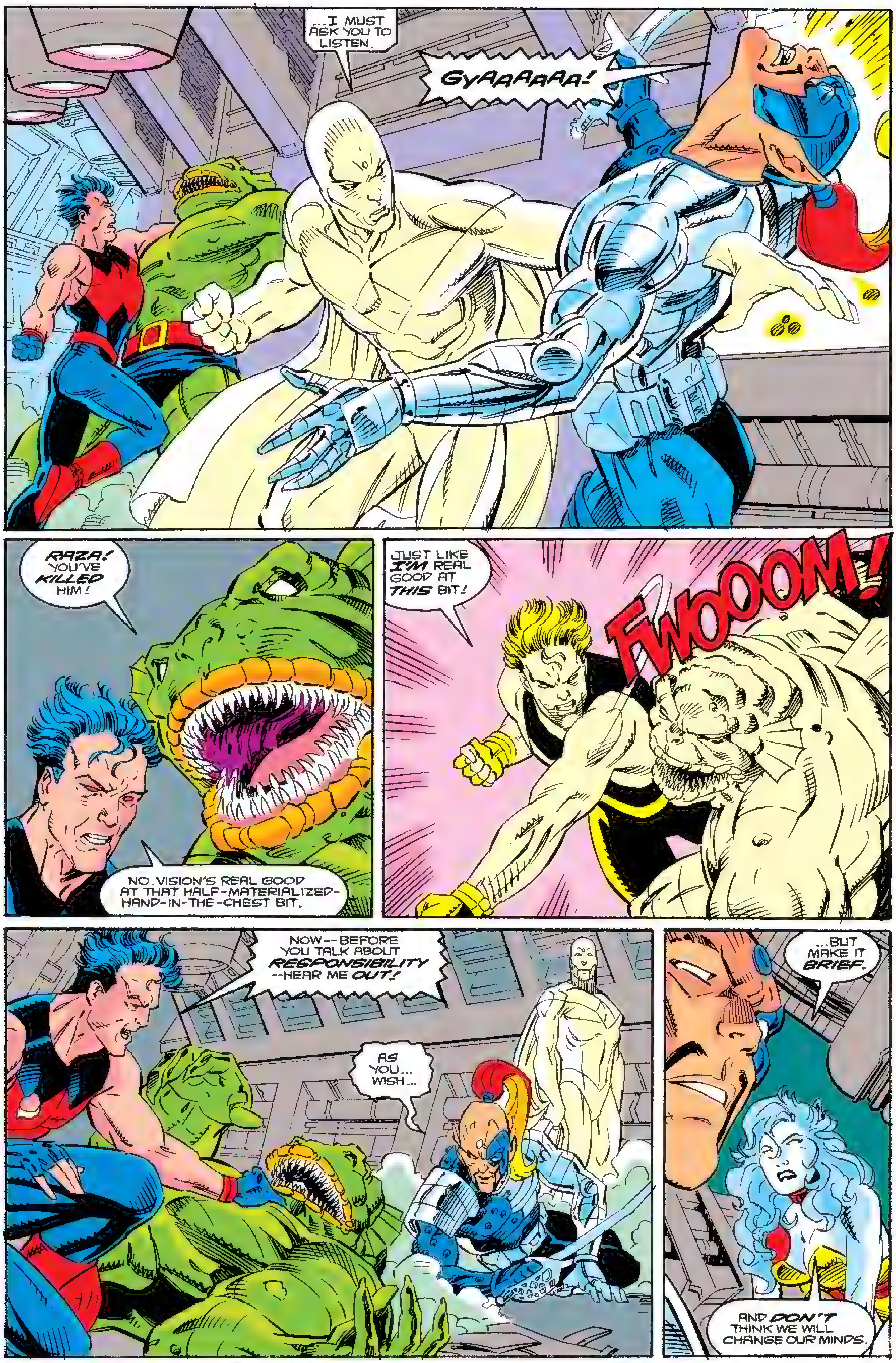

YOU CONTINUE TO INVEST EMOTION IN WANDA.
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? IT USED TO TEAR ME UP, SEEING HER IN LOVE WITH A COMPUTERIZED VERSION OF MY PERSONALITY...
...BUT AT LEAST--IN A WAY--IT MADE ME FEEL SHE LOVED ME.
THEN, WHEN SHE STARTED SHOWING AN INTEREST IN THE REAL ME... LORD, IT WAS COMPLICATED, BUT IT FELT GOOD, TOO.
MADE ME THINK I COULD WIN HER AWAY FROM MY OWN EARLIER SELF. LIKE I WAS MAKING PROGRESS... AS A HUMAN BEING.
IF YOU ARE TROUBLED BY SUCH SELF-DEFEATING THOUGHTS, KNOW THAT I NO LONGER HAVE ANY EMOTIONAL INTEREST IN WANDA.
THAT'S SUPPOSED TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER?!
I'D JUST GOTTEN OVER MY CRUSH ON HER WHEN YOU HAD TO GO ALL-THE-WAY ROBOTIC... AND MAKE HER SUDDENLY SEEM AVAILABLE AGAIN!
BUT NOW I'VE GOT OTHER WOMEN IN MY LIFE-- NORMAL WOMEN!
WELL... SORT OF NORMAL. AS NORMAL AS A STARLET AND A SCREENWRITER CAN GET.
I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT TO BE MESSED UP WITH A SUPER HEROINE AGAIN. I WANT TO CREATE A REAL LIFE FOR MYSELF.
BUT THEN I SEE HER STILL STUCK ON YOU-- JUST A PLASTIC SHELL OF A MAN--AND I KNOW THAT I'VE GOT THE MIND, THE SOUL, THAT SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH WHEN SHE FELL FOR YOU...
...AND I HAVE TO WONDER...
THE ABILITY OF THE HUMAN MIND TO COMPLICATE ITS OWN PROCESSES CONTINUES TO BAFFLE ME.
SURELY IF YOU WOULD SIMPLY SHUT DOWN THESE PASSIONATE RESPONSES AND ACT IN A MANNER INCREMENTAL TO YOUR CONSCIOUS--
--≤MMPH≥
DO ME THE BIGGEST FAVOR ANYBODY EVER DID, VISION.
JUST SHUT UP FOR ONCE.
NOW COME ON. I'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING.
ONE OF THESE PASSAGES HAS TO LEAD TO THE BOMBWORKS. WE'RE GONNA FIND IT-- AND SHUT THIS THING DOWN!

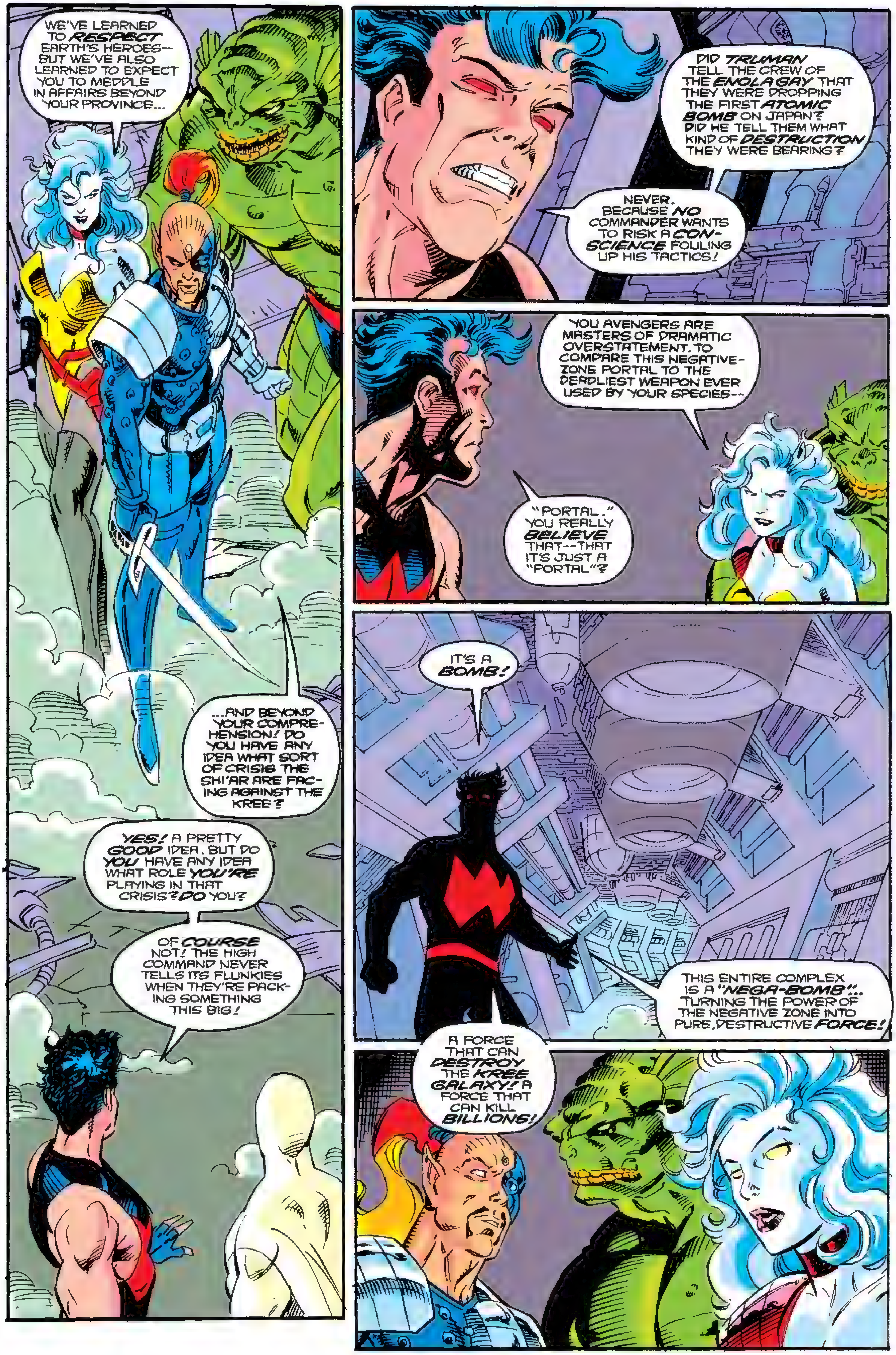

IT IS CONFIRMED, STARJAMMERS...
...OUR SENTRIES HAVE FOUND NO SIGN OF WONDER MAN OR THE VISION ON THE PLANET. WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THEY ARE RIDING THE NEGA-PORTAL.
OUR REMOTE SCOPES DETECT NOTHING ON THE EXTERIOR, EMPRESS. AND AS I SCAN THE INTERIOR...
WAIT.
A BLIP OF *IONIC ENERGY--*
THAT PSEUDO-HUMAN *WONDER MAN!* IF HE SABOTAGES THE PORTAL, THE SHI'AR WAR EFFORT WILL BE DEVASTATED.
AND, I SUSPECT, OUR CONTRACT FOR THIS MISSION WILL BE WORTHLESS.
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? PROGRAM THE AUTO-PILOT, HEPZIBAH...
...AND LET US *STOP* THEM!
FWASH
BLASTED THING JUST TWISTS FOREVER. HAVE YOU SEEN ANYTHING THAT LOOKS LIKE A CONTROL MECHANISM?
NOTHING. WHICH, I MAINTAIN, MAY BE FOR THE BEST.

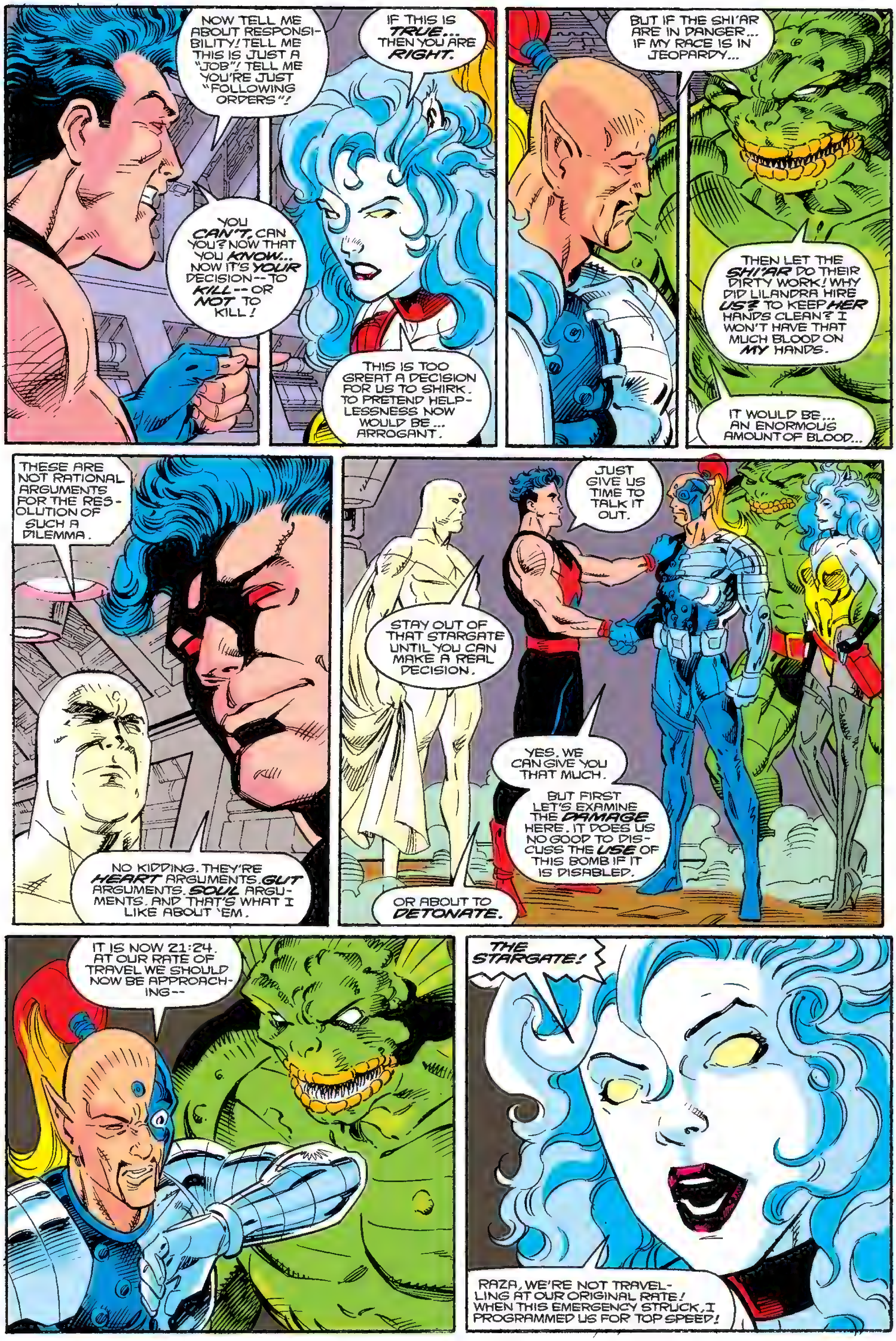

THAT IT *IS*, AVENGER!
HAD YOU *FOUND* THE PORTAL, WE'D *ALL* BE FACING AN ANGRY *EMPRESS LILANDRA!* BUT AS IT IS--
--ONLY *YOU* WILL HAVE QUESTIONS TO ANSWER!

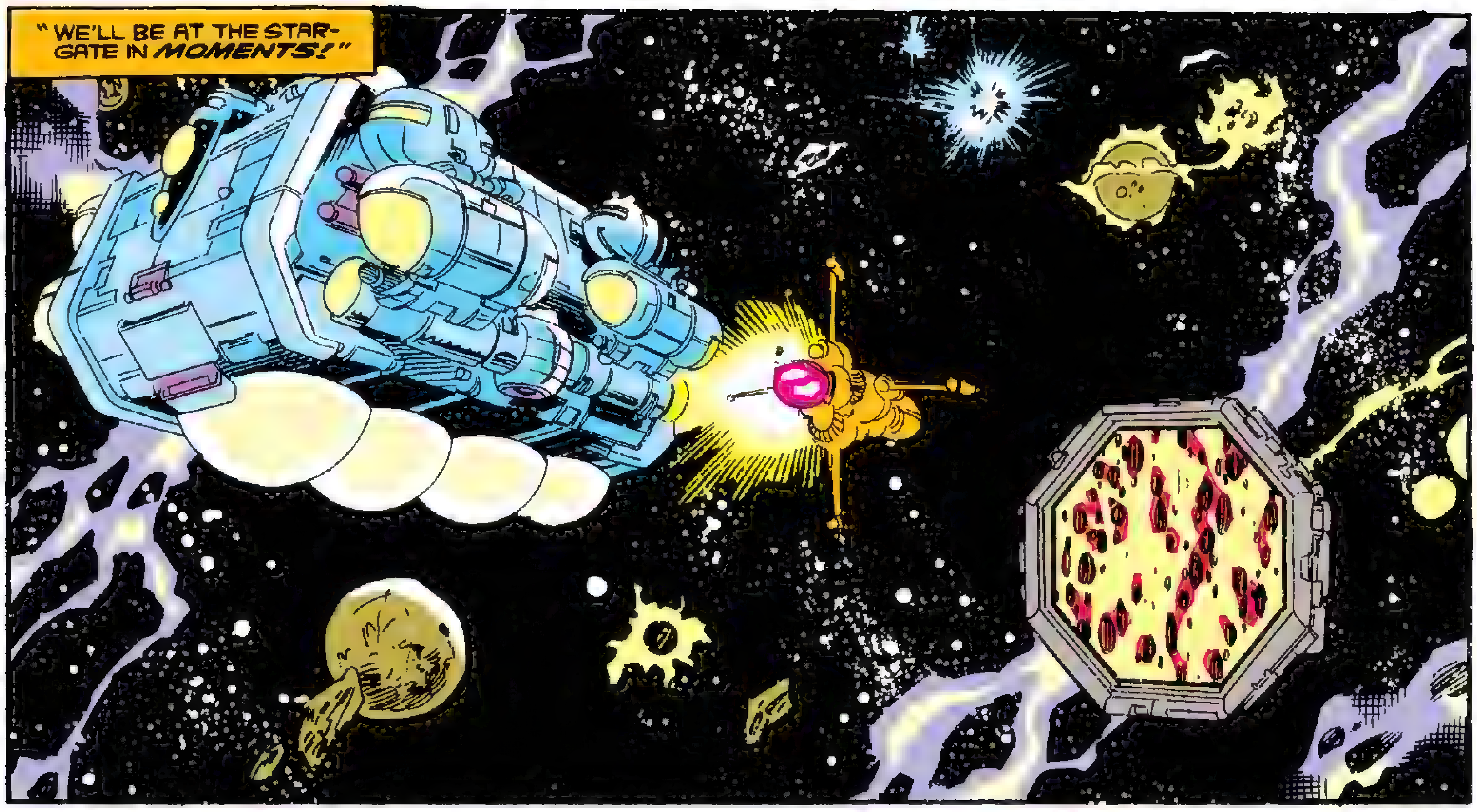

FWOK
VISION! DON'T LET THEM TAKE YOU! I DON'T CARE WHETHER YOU AGREE WITH ME OR NOT--
SHOOM
SAY NO MORE. THERE IS NO BENEFIT IN BEING CAPTURED NOW.
WHAT--?! TURNING IMMATERIAL--?
NOW PUT DOWN THAT SWORD--AND LISTEN TO ME! WE--
HNNG!
FAK!
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE... SOMETHING SOLID!
BEWARE...
...OF FIRING WEAPONS... HERE ...STARJAMMER.
SURRENDER AND I'LL STOP FIRING, EARTHLING!

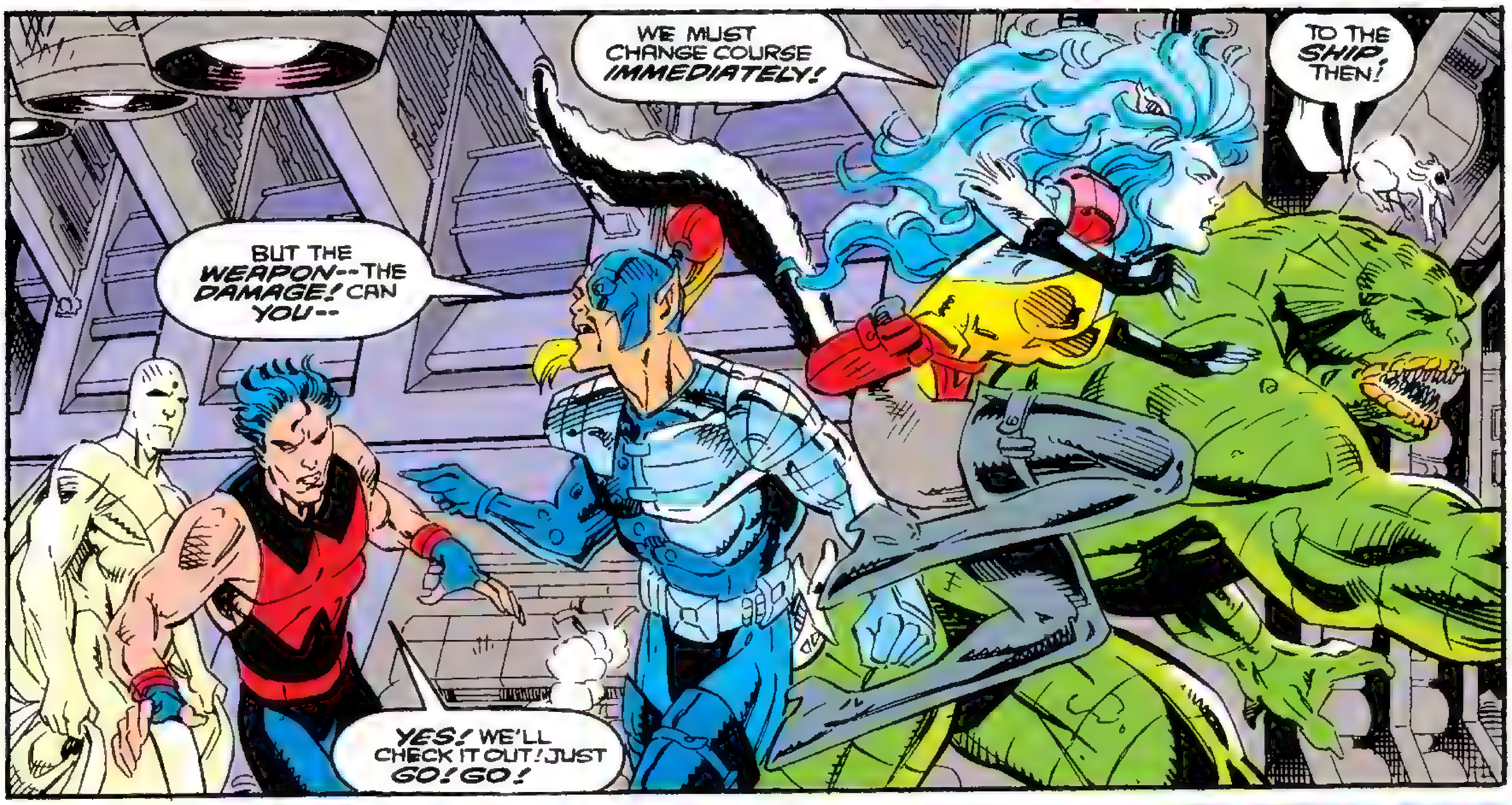

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *TOWING* HERE?
OUR *LIVELIHOOD*, WONDER MAN!
AND, IF MY EMPRESS KNOWS OF WHAT SHE SPEAKS, THE *SURVIVAL* OF THE *SHI'AR* RACE! *MY* RACE!
SHOOM
NO! YOU'VE DAMAGED THE CIRCUITRY! IF YOU'VE DISABLED THIS PORTAL--
KLOK
--I'LL ≷UFF≶
THE "DISABLING" OF THIS "PORTAL" SHOULD BE THE LEAST OF YOUR WORRIES, RAZA.
IF OUR DISCOVERIES WHILE IN THE COMPANY OF THE SHI'AR ARE TRUE, THEN THE IMPLICATIONS OF DAMAGE TO THESE MECHANISMS ARE FAR MORE OMINOUS THAN--
POW!
≷UNGH≶
BLAST IT... VISION... JUST... *TELL* THEM!
WE HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE DONE TO THIS DEVICE--
--AND ALL THE HARM YOU BRING THEREBY TO THE SHI'AR'S EFFORTS TO END THIS WAR!
PLEASE...

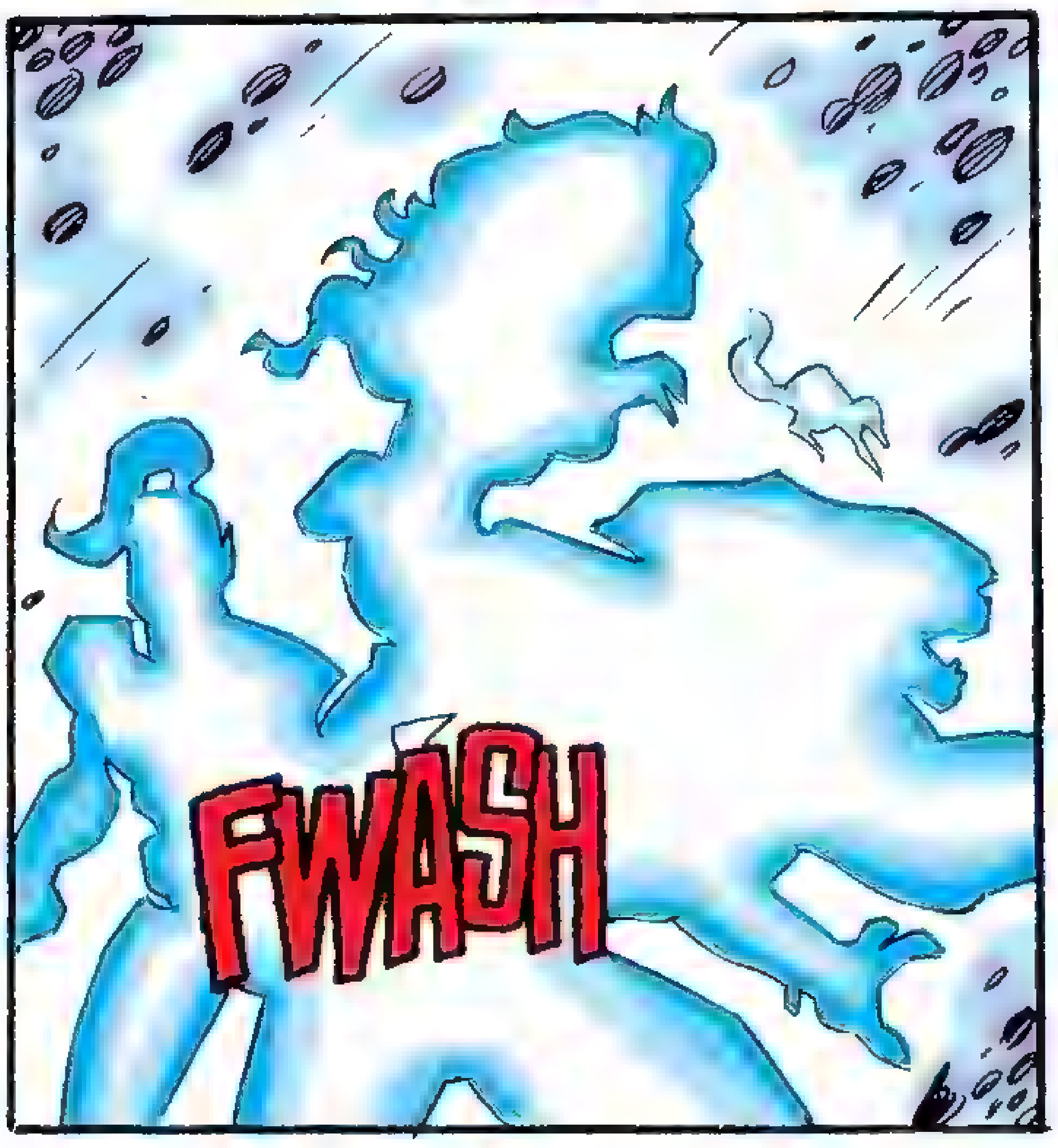

...I MUST ASK YOU TO LISTEN.
GYAAAAAA!
RAZA! YOU'VE KILLED HIM!
NO. VISION'S REAL GOOD AT THAT HALF-MATERIALIZED-HAND-IN-THE-CHEST BIT.
JUST LIKE I'M REAL GOOD AT THIS BIT!
FWOOOM!
NOW--BEFORE YOU TALK ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY--HEAR ME OUT!
AS YOU... WISH...
...BUT MAKE IT BRIEF.
AND DON'T THINK WE WILL CHANGE OUR MINDS.

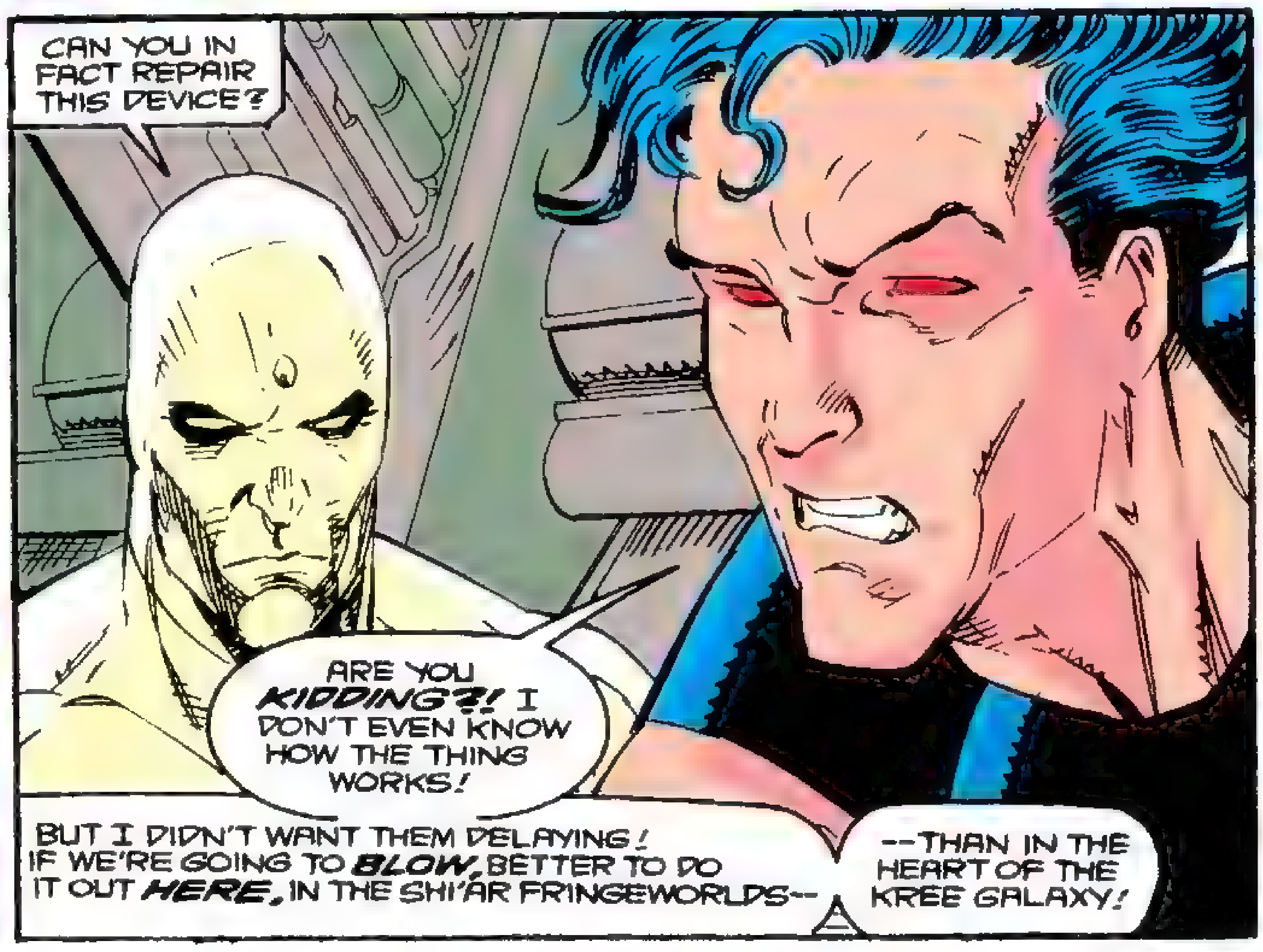

WE'VE LEARNED TO RESPECT EARTH'S HEROES-- BUT WE'VE ALSO LEARNED TO EXPECT YOU TO MEDDLE IN AFFAIRS BEYOND YOUR PROVINCE...
...AND BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT SORT OF CRISIS THE SHI'AR ARE FACING AGAINST THE KREE?
YES! A PRETTY GOOD IDEA. BUT DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT ROLE YOU'RE PLAYING IN THAT CRISIS? DO YOU?
OF COURSE NOT! THE HIGH COMMAND NEVER TELLS ITS FLUNKIES WHEN THEY'RE PACKING SOMETHING THIS BIG!
DID TRUMAN TELL THE CREW OF THE ENOLA GAY THAT THEY WERE DROPPING THE FIRST ATOMIC BOMB ON JAPAN? DID HE TELL THEM WHAT KIND OF DESTRUCTION THEY WERE BEARING?
NEVER. BECAUSE NO COMMANDER WANTS TO RISK A CONSCIENCE FOULING UP HIS TACTICS!
YOU AVENGERS ARE MASTERS OF DRAMATIC OVERSTATEMENT. TO COMPARE THIS NEGATIVE-ZONE PORTAL TO THE DEADLIEST WEAPON EVER USED BY YOUR SPECIES--
"PORTAL." YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT--THAT IT'S JUST A "PORTAL"?
IT'S A BOMB!
THIS ENTIRE COMPLEX IS A "NEGA-BOMB"... TURNING THE POWER OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE INTO PURE, DESTRUCTIVE FORCE!
A FORCE THAT CAN DESTROY THE KREE GALAXY! A FORCE THAT CAN KILL BILLIONS!

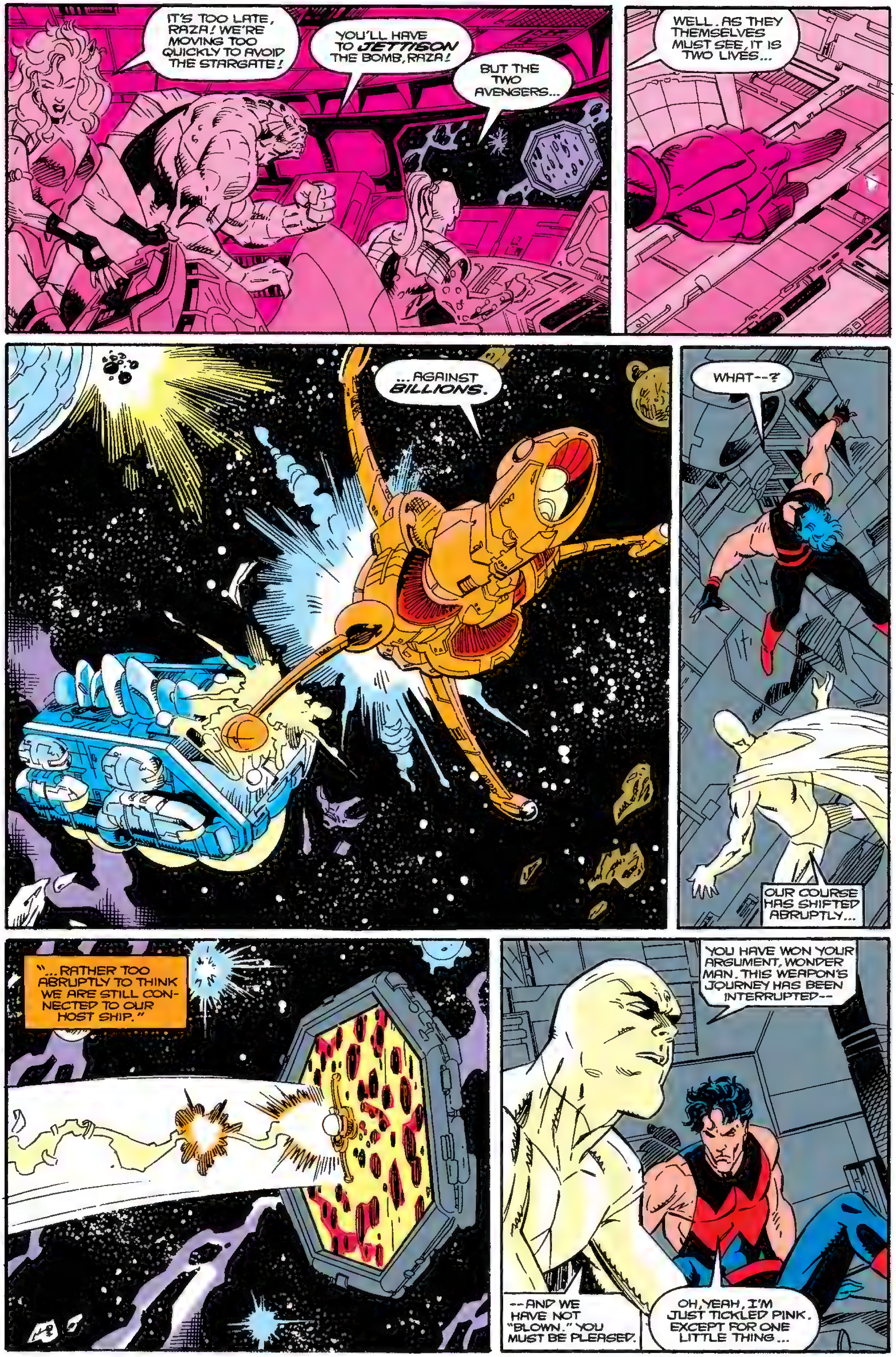

NOW TELL ME ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY! TELL ME THIS IS JUST A "JOB"! TELL ME YOU'RE JUST "FOLLOWING ORDERS"!
YOU *CAN'T*, CAN YOU? NOW THAT YOU *KNOW*... NOW IT'S *YOUR* DECISION--TO *KILL*--OR *NOT* TO KILL!
IF THIS IS *TRUE*... THEN YOU ARE *RIGHT*.
THIS IS TOO GREAT A DECISION FOR US TO SHIRK. TO PRETEND HELPLESSNESS NOW WOULD BE... ARROGANT.
BUT IF THE SHI'AR ARE IN DANGER... IF MY RACE IS IN JEOPARDY...
THEN LET THE *SHI'AR* DO THEIR DIRTY WORK! WHY DID LILANDRA HIRE *US?* TO KEEP *HER* HANDS CLEAN? I WON'T HAVE THAT MUCH BLOOD ON *MY* HANDS.
IT WOULD BE... AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF BLOOD...
THESE ARE NOT RATIONAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE RESOLUTION OF SUCH A DILEMMA.
NO KIDDING. THEY'RE *HEART* ARGUMENTS. *GUT* ARGUMENTS. *SOUL* ARGUMENTS. AND THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT 'EM.
JUST GIVE US TIME TO TALK IT OUT.
STAY OUT OF THAT STARGATE UNTIL YOU CAN MAKE A REAL DECISION.
YES. WE CAN GIVE YOU THAT MUCH.
BUT FIRST LET'S EXAMINE THE *DAMAGE* HERE. IT DOES US NO GOOD TO DISCUSS THE *USE* OF THIS BOMB IF IT IS DISABLED.
OR ABOUT TO *DETONATE*.
IT IS NOW 21:24. AT OUR RATE OF TRAVEL WE SHOULD NOW BE APPROACHING--
THE STARGATE!
RAZA, WE'RE NOT TRAVELLING AT OUR ORIGINAL RATE! WHEN THIS EMERGENCY STRUCK, I PROGRAMMED US FOR TOP SPEED!


"WE'LL BE AT THE STARGATE IN *MOMENTS!*"


WE MUST CHANGE COURSE *IMMEDIATELY!*
TO THE *SHIP,* THEN!
BUT THE *WEAPON*--THE *DAMAGE!* CAN YOU--
YES! WE'LL CHECK IT OUT! JUST *GO! GO!*


FWASH


CAN YOU IN FACT REPAIR THIS DEVICE?
ARE YOU *KIDDING?!* I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW THE THING WORKS!
BUT I DIDN'T WANT THEM DELAYING! IF WE'RE GOING TO *BLOW,* BETTER TO DO IT OUT *HERE,* IN THE SHI'AR FRINGEWORLDS--
--THAN IN THE HEART OF THE KREE GALAXY!


IT'S TOO LATE, RAZA! WE'RE MOVING TOO QUICKLY TO AVOID THE STARGATE!
YOU'LL HAVE TO *JETTISON* THE BOMB, RAZA!
BUT THE TWO AVENGERS...
WELL. AS THEY THEMSELVES MUST SEE, IT IS TWO LIVES...
...AGAINST *BILLIONS.*
WHAT--?
OUR COURSE HAS SHIFTED ABRUPTLY...
"...RATHER TOO ABRUPTLY TO THINK WE ARE STILL CONNECTED TO OUR HOST SHIP."
YOU HAVE WON YOUR ARGUMENT, WONDER MAN. THIS WEAPON'S JOURNEY HAS BEEN INTERRUPTED--
--AND WE HAVE NOT "BLOWN." YOU MUST BE PLEASED.
OH, YEAH, I'M JUST TICKLED PINK. EXCEPT FOR ONE LITTLE THING...

"...THE FACT THAT WE'RE ALL ALONE IN A GIANT BOMB, DRIFTING THROUGH THE SHI'AR GALAXY...
"...WITH NO WAY TO GET *HOME!*"
TO BE CONTINUED IN AVENGERS #346!

MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 12
AVENGERS
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
WHEN DEATHBIRD STRIKES...
...THE KREE SHALL FALL!
EPTING • PALMER

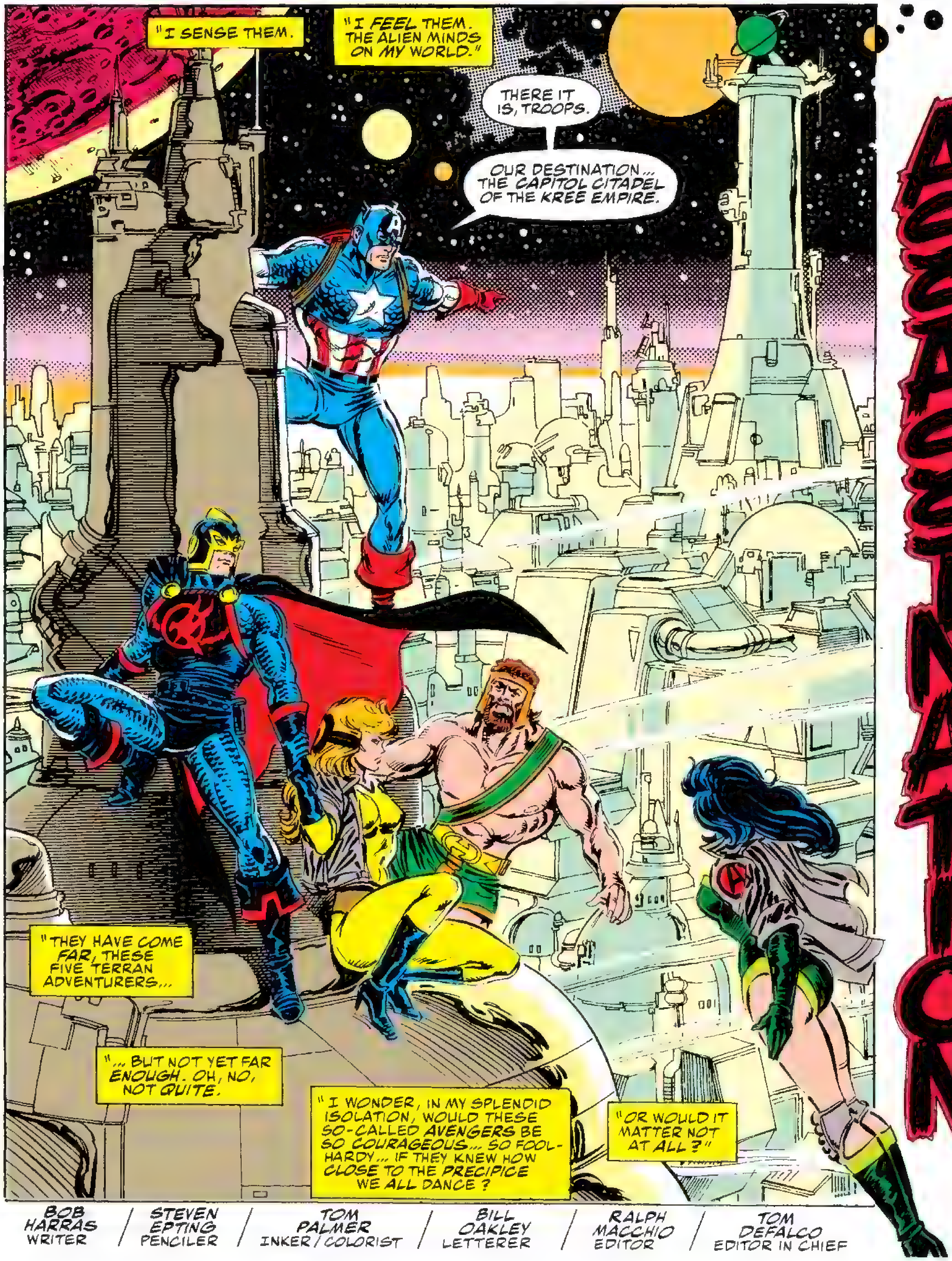
Stan Lee PRESENTS:

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

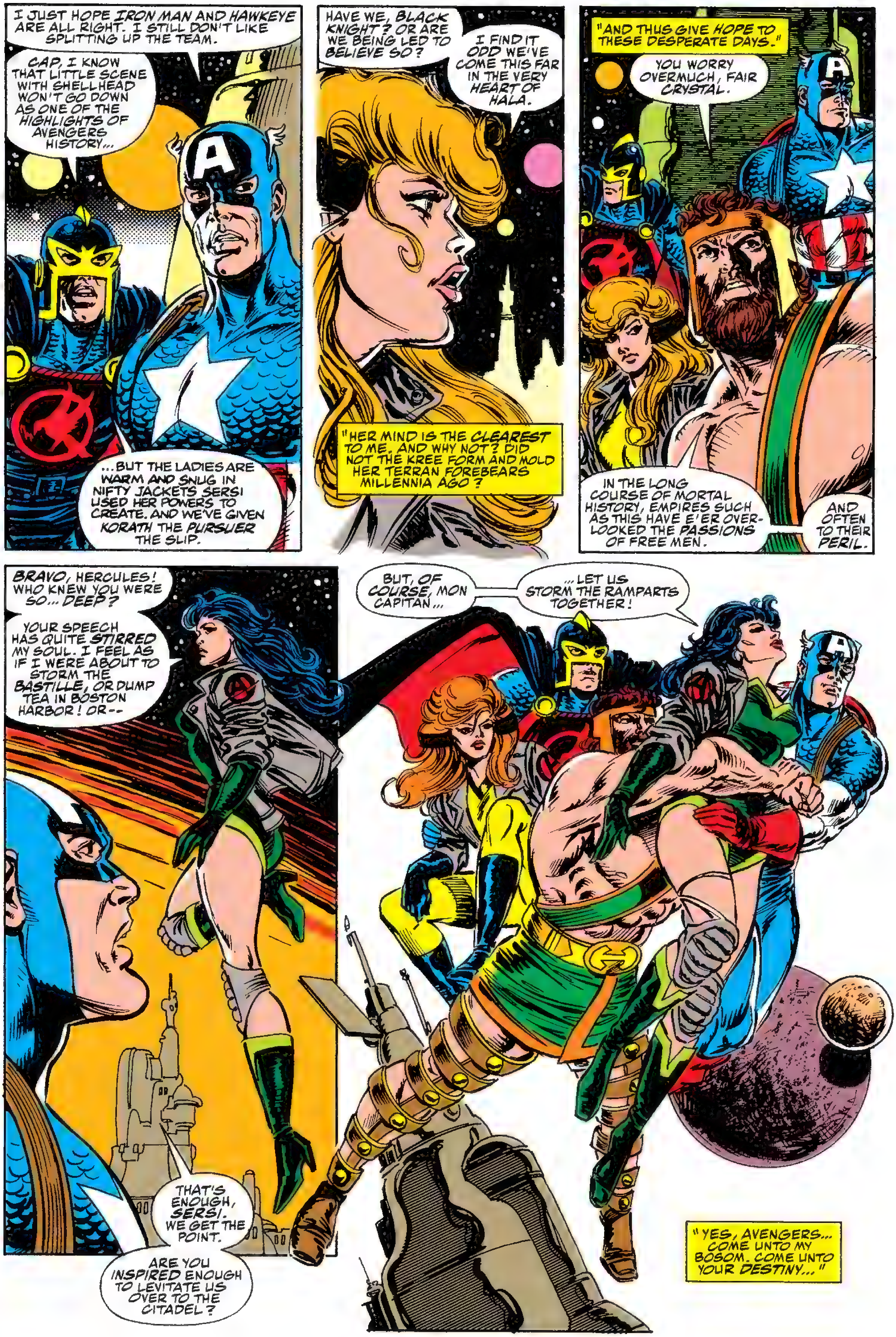
PART 12

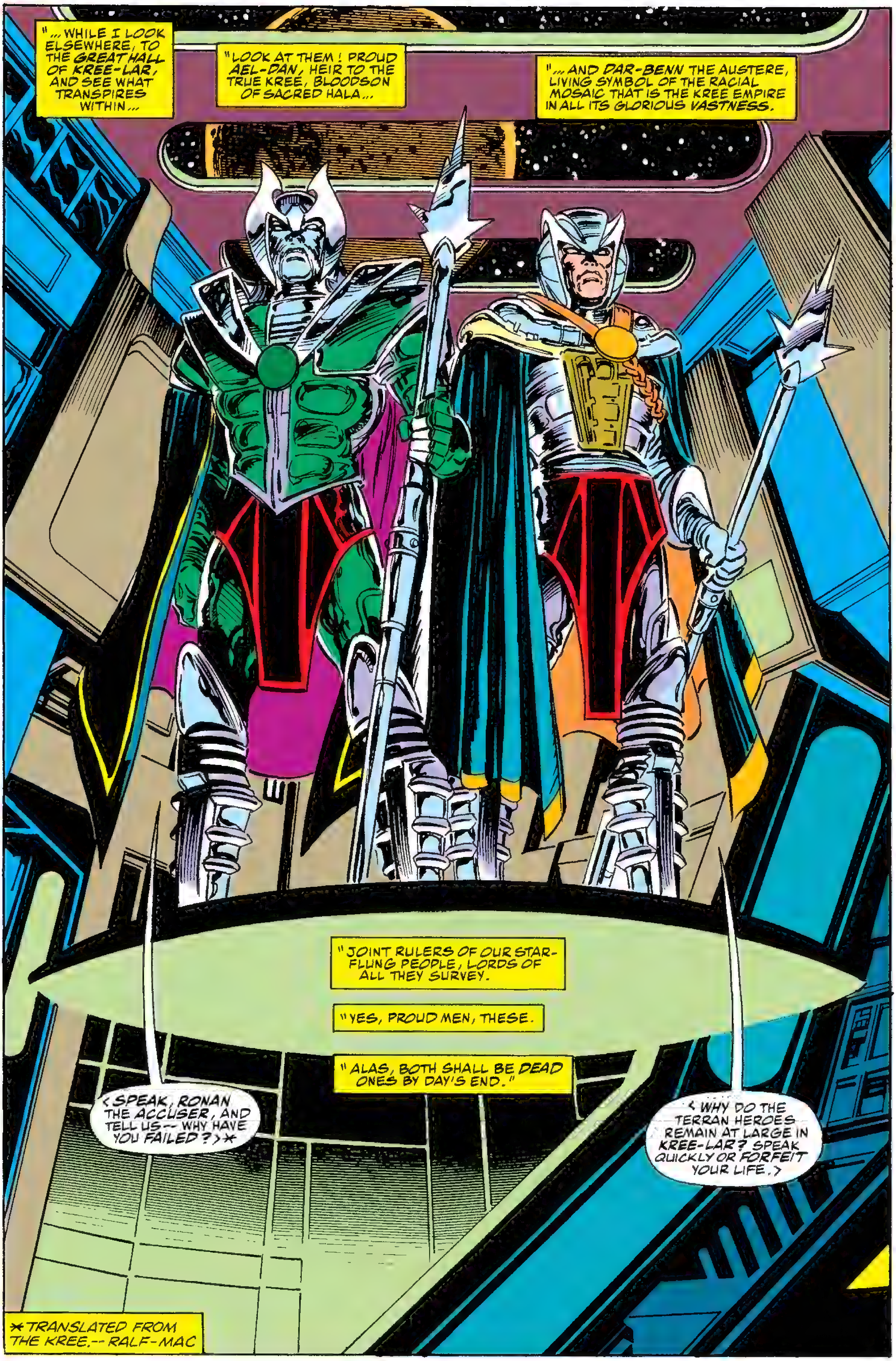
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

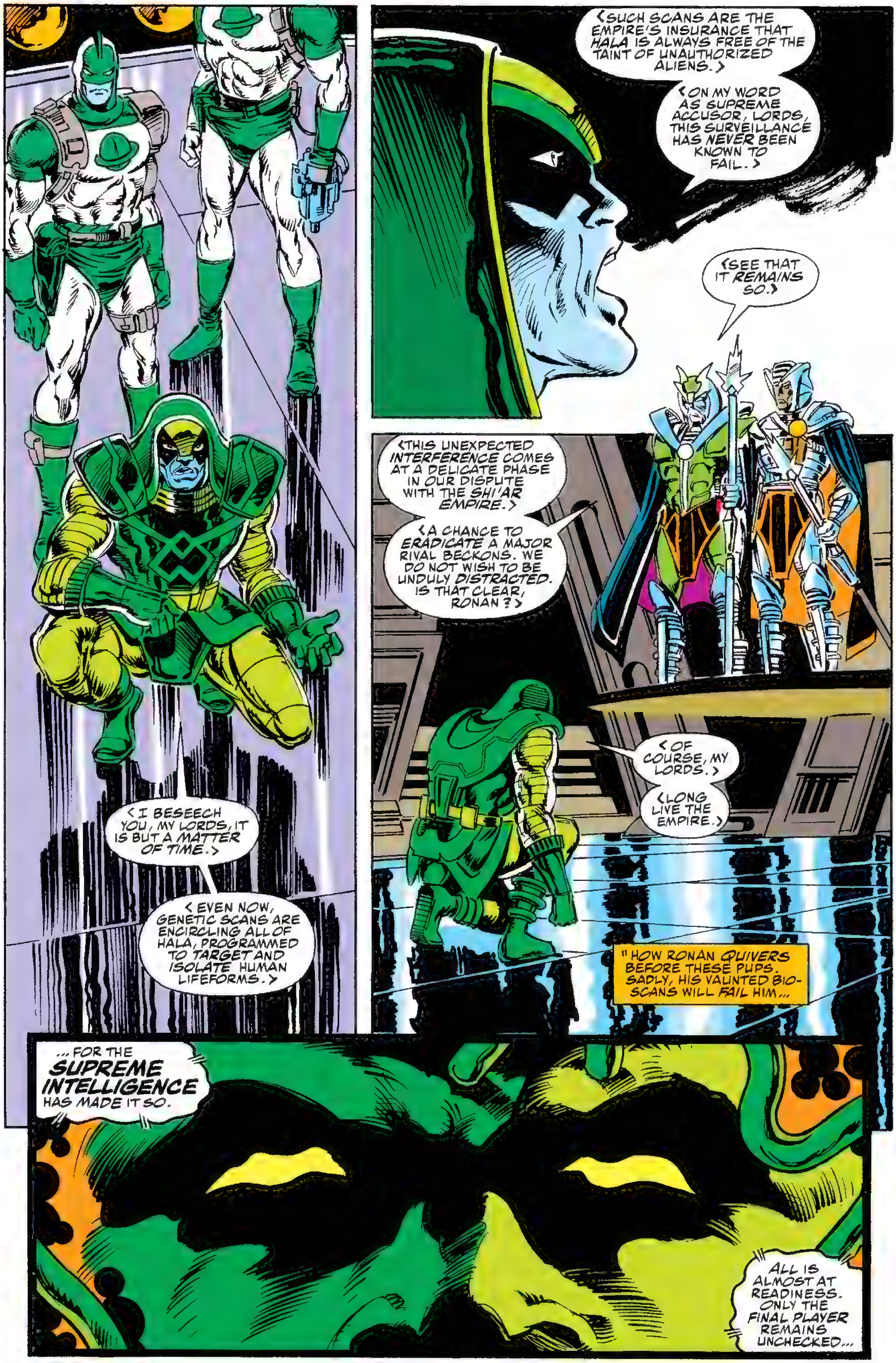
*TWO GALACTIC EMPIRES ARE AT WAR — THE MILITARISTIC KREE AND THE MATRIARCHAL **SHI'AR** — AND THE EARTH IS CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE. ONE CADRE OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAS JOURNEYED TO THE HEART OF THE KREE EMPIRE IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO EASE TENSIONS. THEIR EFFORTS ARE ABOUT TO BECOME **MORE** DESPERATE. . .*


"I SENSE THEM.
"I FEEL THEM. THE ALIEN MINDS ON MY WORLD."
THERE IT IS, TROOPS.
OUR DESTINATION... THE CAPITOL CITADEL OF THE KREE EMPIRE.
ASSASSINATION
"THEY HAVE COME FAR, THESE FIVE TERRAN ADVENTURERS...
"...BUT NOT YET FAR ENOUGH. OH, NO, NOT QUITE.
"I WONDER, IN MY SPLENDID ISOLATION, WOULD THESE SO-CALLED AVENGERS BE SO COURAGEOUS... SO FOOL-HARDY... IF THEY KNEW HOW CLOSE TO THE PRECIPICE WE ALL DANCE?
"OR WOULD IT MATTER NOT AT ALL?"

BOB HARRAS WRITER / STEVEN EPTING PENCILER / TOM PALMER INKER / COLORIST / BILL OAKLEY LETTERER / RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR / TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

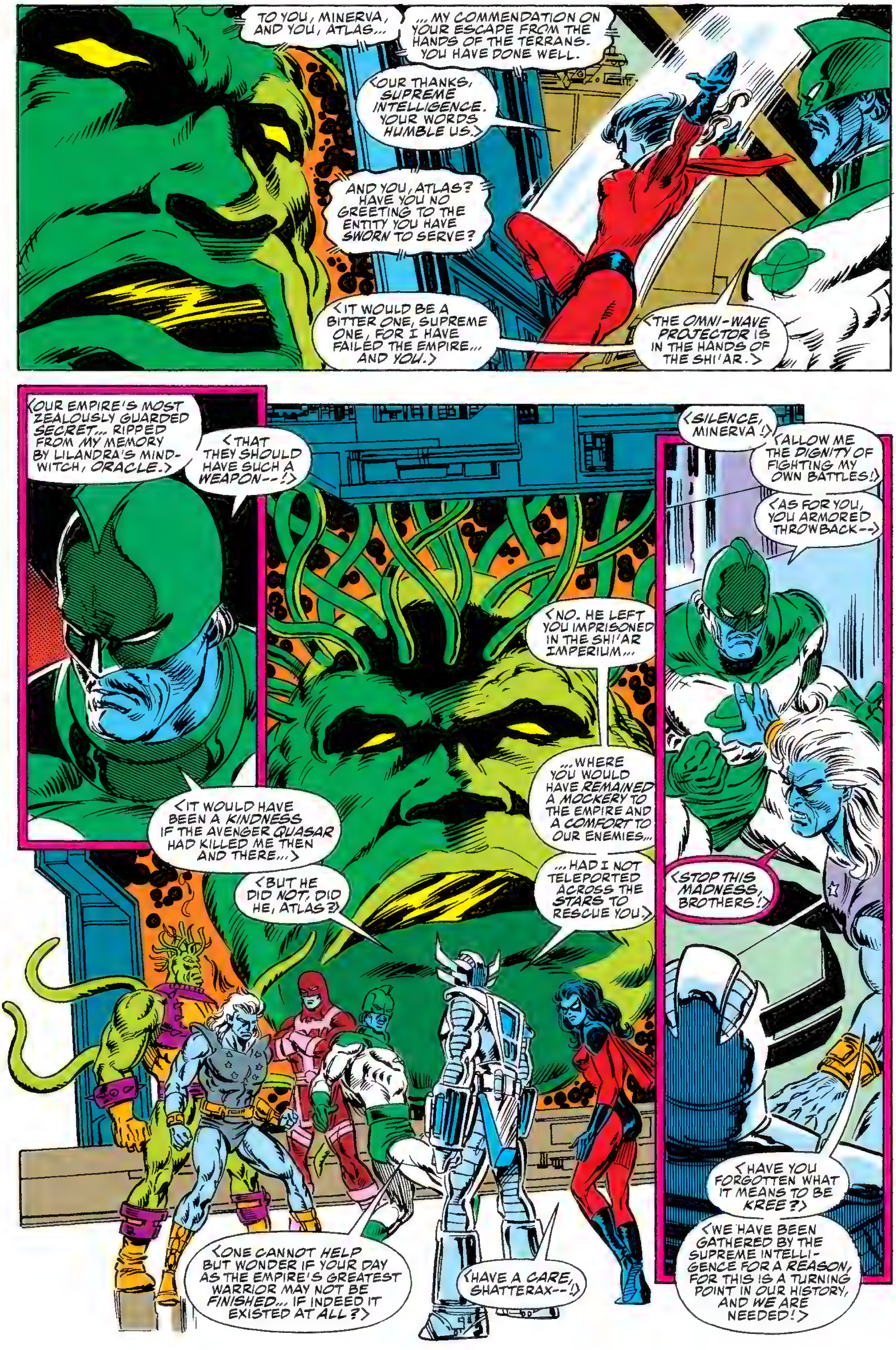

I JUST HOPE IRON MAN AND HAWKEYE ARE ALL RIGHT. I STILL DON'T LIKE SPLITTING UP THE TEAM.
CAP, I KNOW THAT LITTLE SCENE WITH SHELLHEAD WON'T GO DOWN AS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF AVENGERS HISTORY...
...BUT THE LADIES ARE WARM AND SNUG IN NIFTY JACKETS SERSI USED HER POWERS TO CREATE. AND WE'VE GIVEN KORATH THE PURSUER THE SLIP.
HAVE WE, BLACK KNIGHT? OR ARE WE BEING LED TO BELIEVE SO?
I FIND IT ODD WE'VE COME THIS FAR IN THE VERY HEART OF HALA.
"HER MIND IS THE CLEAREST TO ME. AND WHY NOT? DID NOT THE KREE FORM AND MOLD HER TERRAN FOREBEARS MILLENNIA AGO?
"AND THUS GIVE HOPE TO THESE DESPERATE DAYS."
YOU WORRY OVERMUCH, FAIR CRYSTAL.
IN THE LONG COURSE OF MORTAL HISTORY, EMPIRES SUCH AS THIS HAVE E'ER OVERLOOKED THE PASSIONS OF FREE MEN.
AND OFTEN TO THEIR PERIL.
BRAVO, HERCULES! WHO KNEW YOU WERE SO... DEEP?
YOUR SPEECH HAS QUITE STIRRED MY SOUL. I FEEL AS IF I WERE ABOUT TO STORM THE BASTILLE, OR DUMP TEA IN BOSTON HARBOR! OR--
THAT'S ENOUGH, SERSI. WE GET THE POINT.
ARE YOU INSPIRED ENOUGH TO LEVITATE US OVER TO THE CITADEL?
BUT, OF COURSE, MON CAPITAN...
...LET US STORM THE RAMPARTS TOGETHER!
"YES, AVENGERS... COME UNTO MY BOSOM. COME UNTO YOUR DESTINY..."

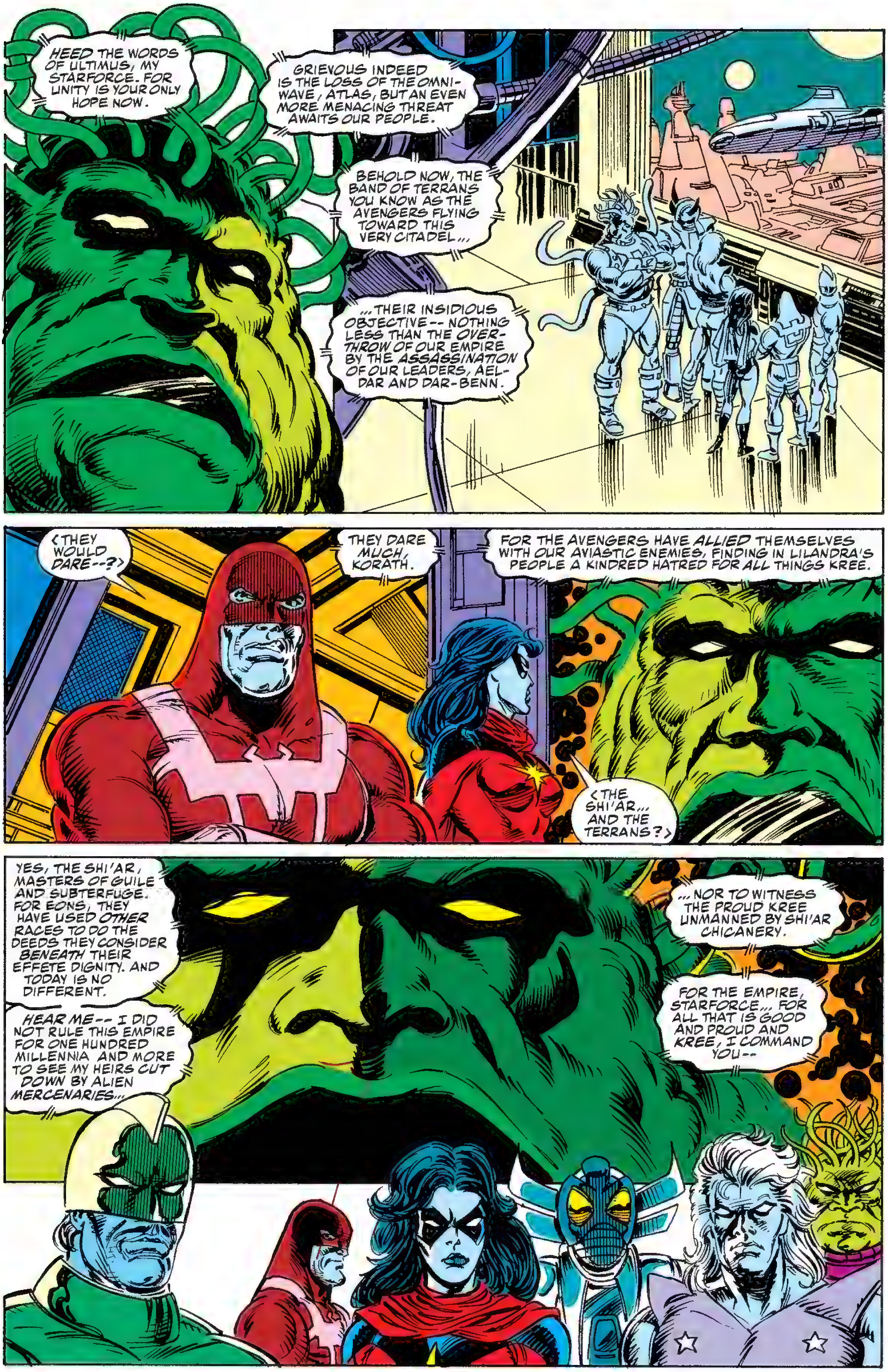

"...WHILE I LOOK ELSEWHERE, TO THE GREAT HALL OF KREE-LAR, AND SEE WHAT TRANSPIRES WITHIN...
"LOOK AT THEM! PROUD AEL-DAN, HEIR TO THE TRUE KREE, BLOODSON OF SACRED HALA...
"...AND DAR-BENN THE AUSTERE, LIVING SYMBOL OF THE RACIAL MOSAIC THAT IS THE KREE EMPIRE IN ALL ITS GLORIOUS VASTNESS.
"JOINT RULERS OF OUR STAR-FLUNG PEOPLE, LORDS OF ALL THEY SURVEY.
"YES, PROUD MEN, THESE.
"ALAS, BOTH SHALL BE DEAD ONES BY DAY'S END."
<SPEAK, RONAN THE ACCUSER, AND TELL US-- WHY HAVE YOU FAILED?>*
< WHY DO THE TERRAN HEROES REMAIN AT LARGE IN KREE-LAR? SPEAK QUICKLY OR FORFEIT YOUR LIFE.>
*TRANSLATED FROM THE KREE.-- RALF-MAC


<I BESEECH YOU, MY LORDS, IT IS BUT A MATTER OF TIME.>
<EVEN NOW, GENETIC SCANS ARE ENCIRCLING ALL OF HALA, PROGRAMMED TO TARGET AND ISOLATE HUMAN LIFEFORMS.>
<SUCH SCANS ARE THE EMPIRE'S INSURANCE THAT HALA IS ALWAYS FREE OF THE TAINT OF UNAUTHORIZED ALIENS.>
<ON MY WORD AS SUPREME ACCUSOR, LORDS, THIS SURVEILLANCE HAS NEVER BEEN KNOWN TO FAIL.>
<SEE THAT IT REMAINS SO.>
<THIS UNEXPECTED INTERFERENCE COMES AT A DELICATE PHASE IN OUR DISPUTE WITH THE SHI'AR EMPIRE.>
<A CHANCE TO ERADICATE A MAJOR RIVAL BECKONS. WE DO NOT WISH TO BE UNDULY DISTRACTED. IS THAT CLEAR, RONAN?>
<OF COURSE, MY LORDS.>
<LONG LIVE THE EMPIRE.>
"HOW RONAN QUIVERS BEFORE THESE PUPS. SADLY, HIS VAUNTED BIO-SCANS WILL FAIL HIM...
...FOR THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE HAS MADE IT SO.
ALL IS ALMOST AT READINESS. ONLY THE FINAL PLAYER REMAINS UNCHECKED...

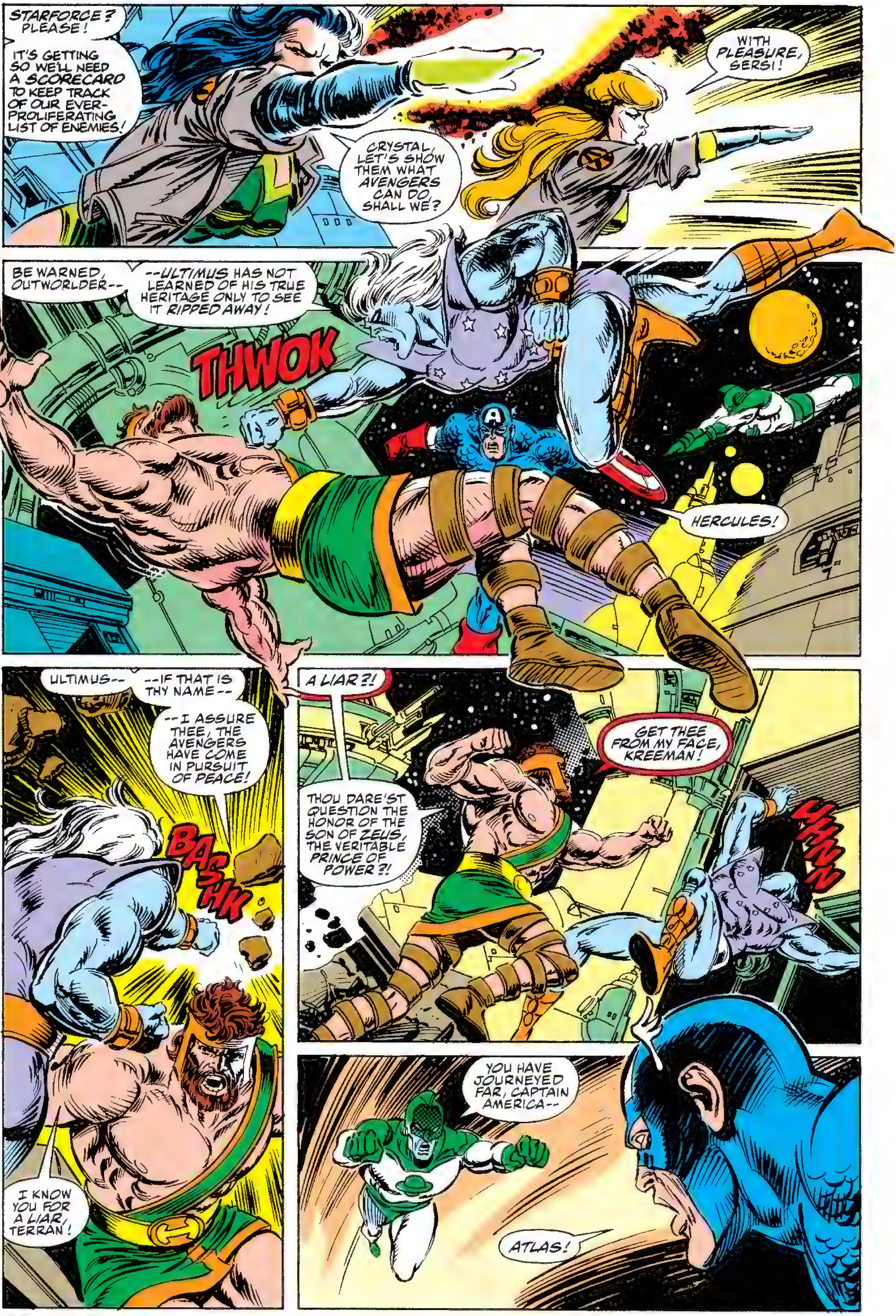
"...A MATTER THAT I SHALL ATTEND TO NOW.
"THAT BATTERED, RUSTY *HULK* OF A SHIP SHOULD BE THE ONE. A CRAFT WORTHY OF SUCH A PASSENGER.
"AH, IT IS *SO*. AND THE ENDGAME BEGINS."
<YOU WANTED HALA... AND *K'QILL VOR DON* GAVE YOU HALA!>
<THOUGH I *STILL* SAY ONLY A *MADMAN* COMES TO THIS PLACE WITHOUT PROPER CLEARANCE. THE KREE DON'T TAKE *KINDLY* TO UNINVITED GUESTS.>
<BUT I NEVER ASK THE BUSINESS OF MY CLIENTS. A WISE MAN IS AN *IGNORANT* MAN, I SAY.>
<I FEARED YOUR REPUTATION AS THE BEST SMUGGLER IN THE QUADRANT MIGHT BE THE STUFF OF LEGEND, BUT I SEE IT IS WELL-DESERVED.>
<AYE, 'TIS. NOW PAY ME *QUICK*, FEMALE. I WANT OUT OF HERE *FAST*.>
<IF THE KREE KNEW WE WERE HERE, WE'D BE DEAD A *THOUSAND* TIMES OVER!>
SNIKT
<FEAR NOT THE WRATH OF THE *KREE*, K'QILL VOR DON...>
SHUNT
UHHN
<...I ASSURE YOU, IT IS *NOTHING* LIKE UNTO THAT OF THE SHI'AR.>
<PITY I COULD NOT TRUST YOUR IGNORANCE...>
<...BUT I HAVE LEARNED TO TRUST *LITTLE* IN THIS LIFE.>
"TREMBLE IN YOUR SLEEP, O HALA, FOR THIS NIGHT *DEATHBIRD* WALKS AMONGST US!"
"AND THAT IS BUT THE *PRELUDE* TO NIGHTMARE."

BUT *MUCH* REMAINS TO BE DONE BEFORE THE FRAGILE THREADS OF MY GRAND DESIGN WIND TOGETHER TO BRING THE KREE TO THEIR MOMENT OF GREATEST PERIL...
...OR ULTIMATE VICTORY.
THE MAD DEATHBIRD, HER SISTER, FAIR LILANDRA IN FAR-OFF SHI'AR, POMPOUS AEL-DAN AND DAR-BENN, AND ESPECIALLY THE ACCURSED AVENGERS... *EACH* MUST PLAY OUT THEIR ROLE OR *ALL* COULD BE UNDONE.
THUS, I SUMMON THE CATALYST TO MY PLAN...
...THE LAST, *BEST* HOPE FOR THE KREE...
...DR. MINERVA...
...SHATTERAX...
...MY OWN SUPREMOR...
...CAPTAIN ATLAS...
...KORATH THE PURSUER...
...ULTIMUS...
STAR FORCE!

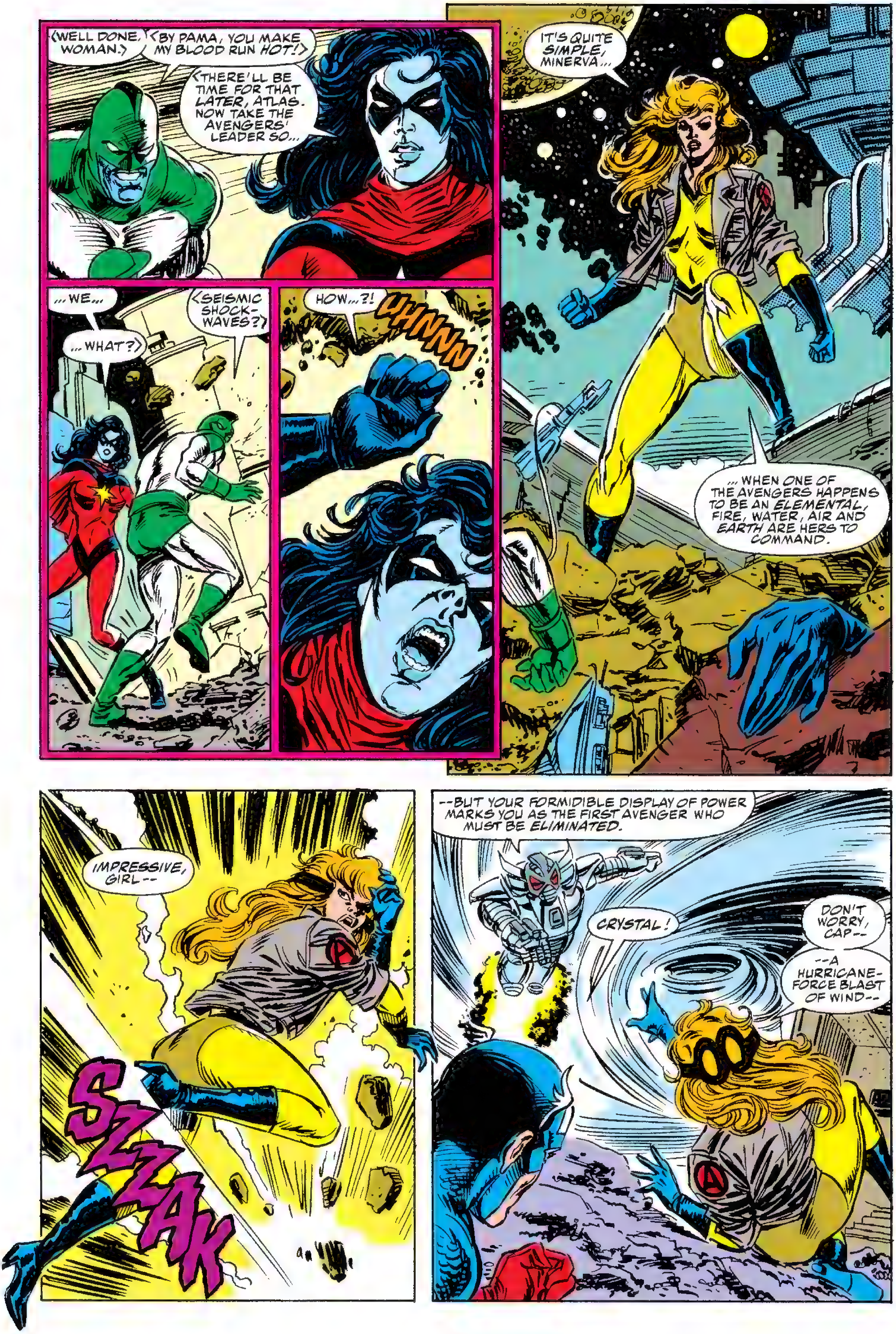

TO YOU, MINERVA, AND YOU, ATLAS...
...MY COMMENDATION ON YOUR ESCAPE FROM THE HANDS OF THE TERRANS. YOU HAVE DONE WELL.
<OUR THANKS, SUPREME INTELLIGENCE. YOUR WORDS HUMBLE US.>
AND YOU, ATLAS? HAVE YOU NO GREETING TO THE ENTITY YOU HAVE SWORN TO SERVE?
<IT WOULD BE A BITTER ONE, SUPREME ONE, FOR I HAVE FAILED THE EMPIRE... AND YOU.>
<THE OMNI-WAVE PROJECTOR IS IN THE HANDS OF THE SHI'AR.>
<OUR EMPIRE'S MOST ZEALOUSLY GUARDED SECRET... RIPPED FROM MY MEMORY BY LILANDRA'S MIND-WITCH, ORACLE.>
<THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE SUCH A WEAPON--!>
<IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A KINDNESS IF THE AVENGER QUASAR HAD KILLED ME THEN AND THERE...>
<NO. HE LEFT YOU IMPRISONED IN THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM...
...WHERE YOU WOULD HAVE REMAINED A MOCKERY TO THE EMPIRE AND A COMFORT TO OUR ENEMIES...
...HAD I NOT TELEPORTED ACROSS THE STARS TO RESCUE YOU.>
<BUT HE DID NOT, DID HE, ATLAS?>
<ONE CANNOT HELP BUT WONDER IF YOUR DAY AS THE EMPIRE'S GREATEST WARRIOR MAY NOT BE FINISHED... IF INDEED IT EXISTED AT ALL?>
<HAVE A CARE, SHATTERAX--!>
<SILENCE, MINERVA!>
<ALLOW ME THE DIGNITY OF FIGHTING MY OWN BATTLES!>
<AS FOR YOU, YOU ARMORED THROWBACK-->
<STOP THIS MADNESS, BROTHERS!>
<HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT IT MEANS TO BE KREE?>
<WE HAVE BEEN GATHERED BY THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE FOR A REASON, FOR THIS IS A TURNING POINT IN OUR HISTORY, AND WE ARE NEEDED!>

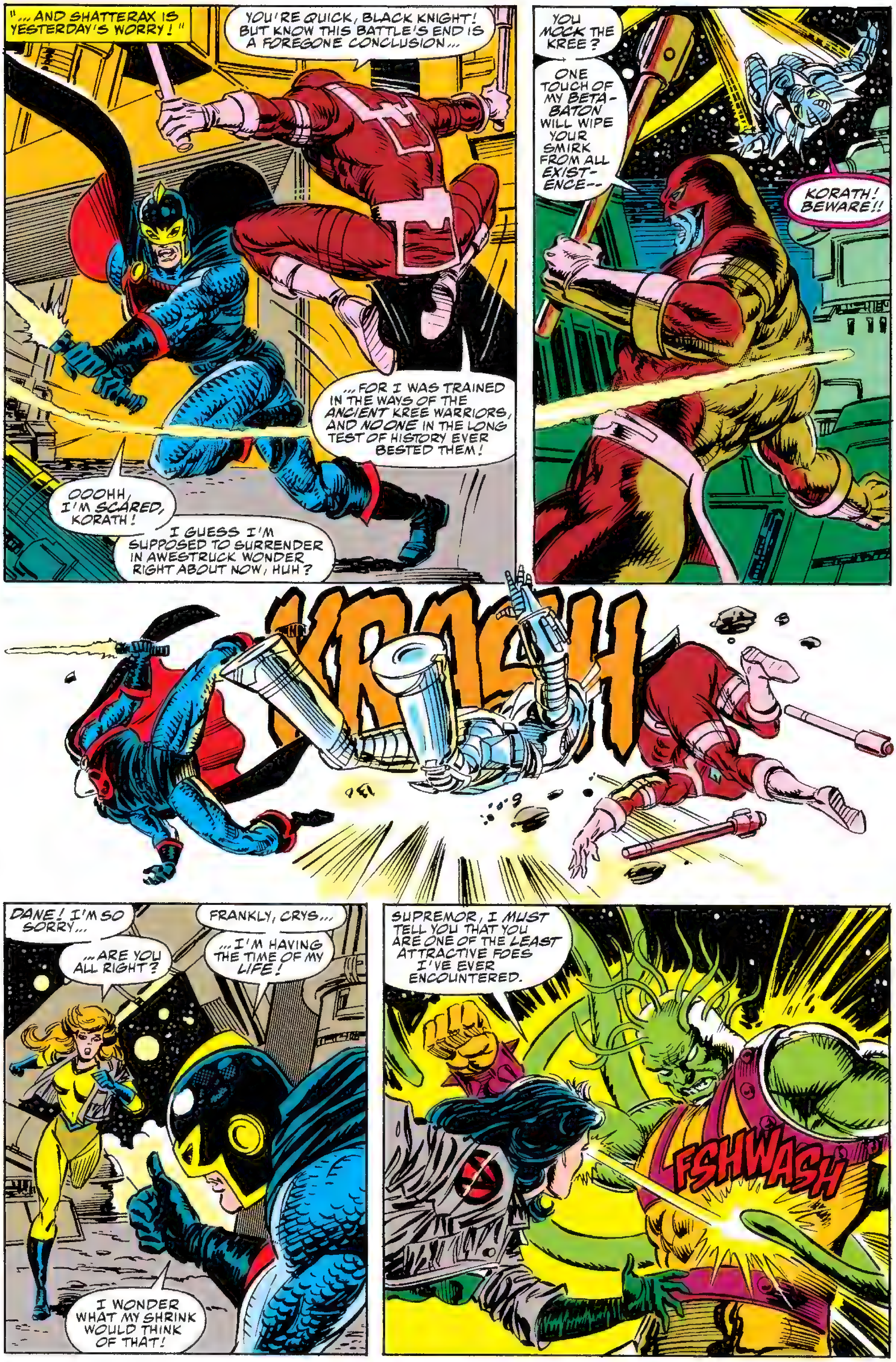

HEED THE WORDS OF ULTIMUS, MY STARFORCE. FOR UNITY IS YOUR ONLY HOPE NOW.
GRIEVOUS INDEED IS THE LOSS OF THE OMNI-WAVE, ATLAS, BUT AN EVEN MORE MENACING THREAT AWAITS OUR PEOPLE.
BEHOLD NOW, THE BAND OF TERRANS YOU KNOW AS THE AVENGERS FLYING TOWARD THIS VERY CITADEL...
...THEIR INSIDIOUS OBJECTIVE -- NOTHING LESS THAN THE OVERTHROW OF OUR EMPIRE BY THE ASSASSINATION OF OUR LEADERS, AEL-DAR AND DAR-BENN.
‹THEY WOULD DARE--?›
THEY DARE MUCH, KORATH.
FOR THE AVENGERS HAVE ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH OUR AVIASTIC ENEMIES, FINDING IN LILANDRA'S PEOPLE A KINDRED HATRED FOR ALL THINGS KREE.
‹THE SHI'AR... AND THE TERRANS?›
YES, THE SHI'AR, MASTERS OF GUILE AND SUBTERFUGE. FOR EONS, THEY HAVE USED OTHER RACES TO DO THE DEEDS THEY CONSIDER BENEATH THEIR EFFETE DIGNITY. AND TODAY IS NO DIFFERENT.
HEAR ME-- I DID NOT RULE THIS EMPIRE FOR ONE HUNDRED MILLENNIA AND MORE TO SEE MY HEIRS CUT DOWN BY ALIEN MERCENARIES...
...NOR TO WITNESS THE PROUD KREE UNMANNED BY SHI'AR CHICANERY.
FOR THE EMPIRE, STARFORCE... FOR ALL THAT IS GOOD AND PROUD AND KREE, I COMMAND YOU--

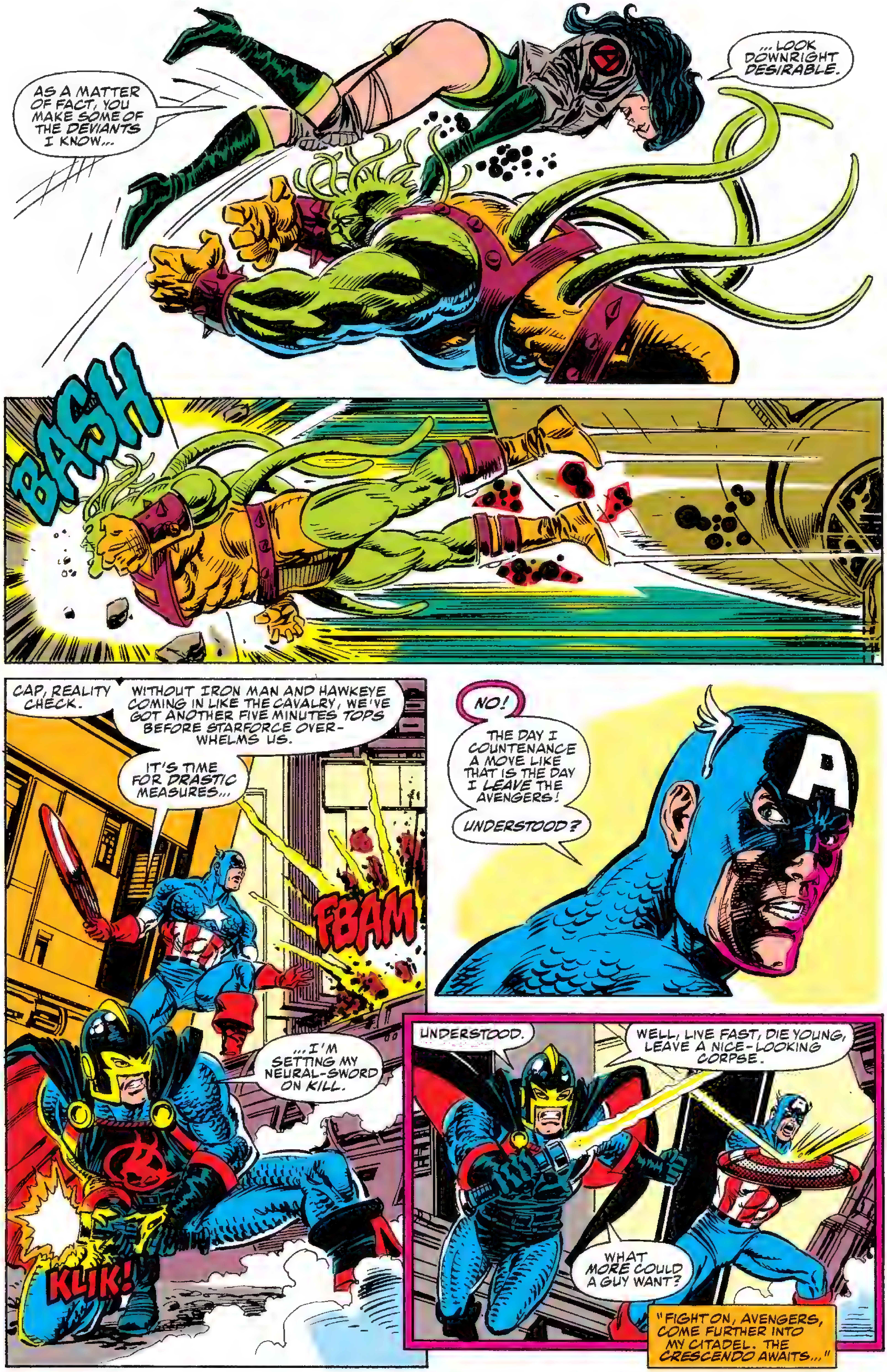
"...STOP THE ASSASSINS!"
GOOD DEAL, SERSI...
...WE MADE THE CITADEL!
DID YOU DOUBT WE WOULD, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
NOW THAT WE'VE ARRIVED, HOW DO YOU PROPOSE WE FIND THE KREE LEADERS--NEVER MIND CONVINCING THEM TO END THEIR WAR?
FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN, THEY SEEM TO BE A BULL-HEADED RACE.
THAT'S PUTTING IT MILDLY, AVENGER.
BUT STOPPING THIS WAR IS A MATTER OF EARTH'S SURVIVAL; WE DON'T--
CAP! LOOK OUT!
SHZA-BAM
AVENGERS-- DEFENSIVE PERIMETER... NOW!!
IT DOTH APPEAR THIS EMPIRE DOTH NOT O'ER LOOK FREE MEN...
...UNFORTUNATELY.
LOOKS LIKE KORATH WENT TO FIND SOME BUDDIES, CAP.
EARTHERS... YOU ARE PRISONERS OF THE KREE EMPIRE!
SURRENDER TO STARFORCE!


STARFORCE? PLEASE!
IT'S GETTING SO WE'LL NEED A SCORECARD TO KEEP TRACK OF OUR EVER-PROLIFERATING LIST OF ENEMIES!
CRYSTAL, LET'S SHOW THEM WHAT AVENGERS CAN DO, SHALL WE?
WITH PLEASURE, SERSI!
BE WARNED, OUTWORLDER--
--ULTIMUS HAS NOT LEARNED OF HIS TRUE HERITAGE ONLY TO SEE IT RIPPED AWAY!
THWOK
HERCULES!
ULTIMUS--
--IF THAT IS THY NAME--
--I ASSURE THEE, THE AVENGERS HAVE COME IN PURSUIT OF PEACE!
BASHK
I KNOW YOU FOR A LIAR, TERRAN!
A LIAR?!
THOU DARE'ST QUESTION THE HONOR OF THE SON OF ZEUS, THE VERITABLE PRINCE OF POWER?!
GET THEE FROM MY FACE, KREEMAN!
UHNN
YOU HAVE JOURNEYED FAR, CAPTAIN AMERICA--
ATLAS!

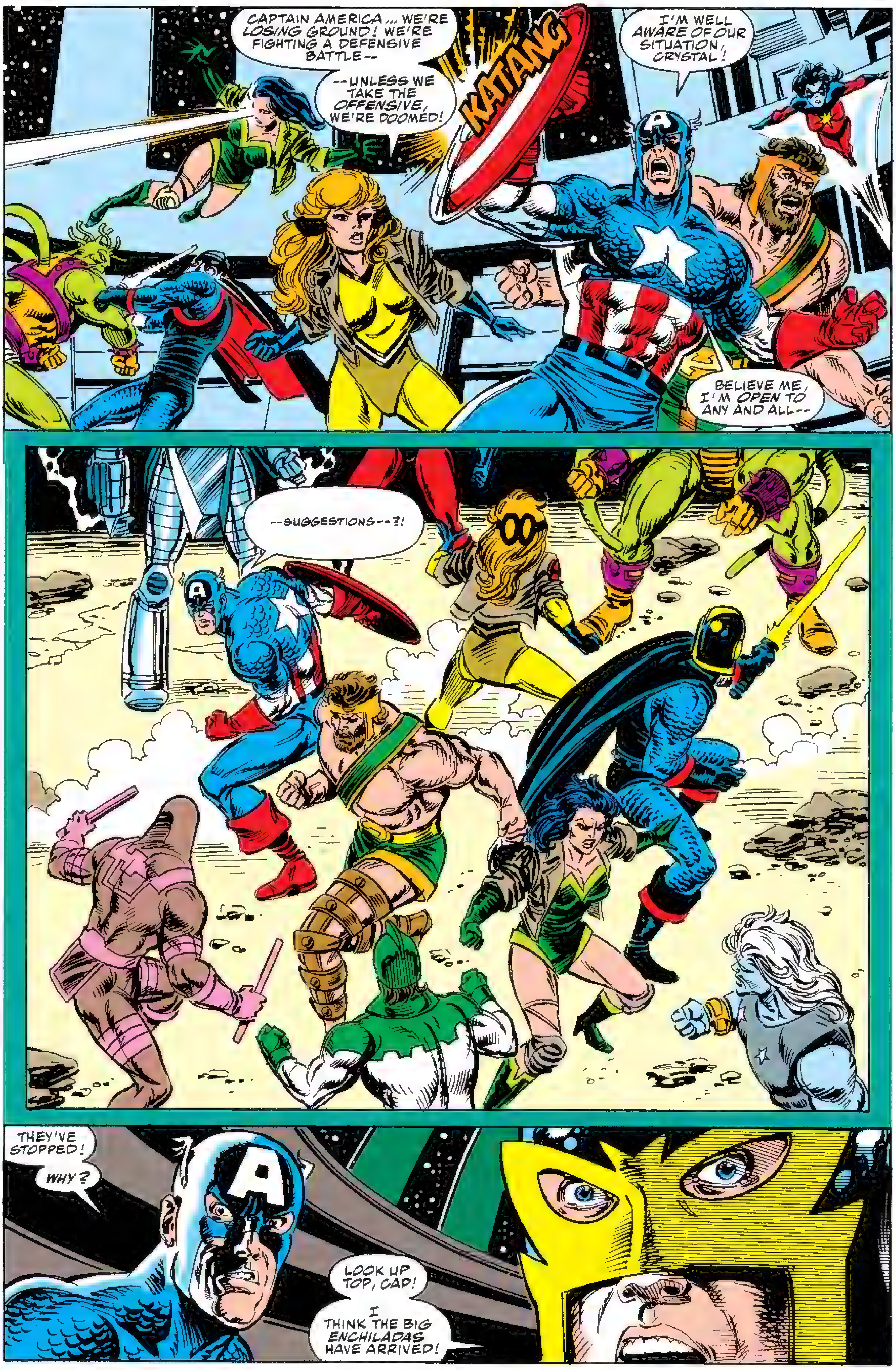
--BUT, BY THE RINGS OF HALA, I *SWEAR* YOUR MISSION WILL *FAIL*!
HOW DID YOU ESCAPE THE AVENGERS BACK ON EARTH?
IF YOU'VE *HARMED* THEM--!
YOUR *PATHETIC* EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT WITH YOUR UNDERLINGS WILL BE YOUR UNDOING, SHI'AR PAWN!
SHI'AR? WHERE'D YOU GET *THAT* IDEA?
BUDDY, I DON'T HAVE THE *TIME* TO TELL YOU HOW *FAR* OFF THE MARK YOU ARE, SO--
THWOK
--PLEASANT DREAMS!
HERC LOOKS LIKE HE NEEDS A HAND--
SNAKT
SWOOSH
--AND I *AIM* TO OBLIGE!
THAT SHOULD TAKE CARE OF ULTIMUS.
AND *THIS*--
--SHOULD TAKE CARE OF *YOU*, CAPTAIN!
WHUMP
UHHNN


<WELL DONE, WOMAN.>
<BY PAMA, YOU MAKE MY BLOOD RUN HOT!>
<THERE'LL BE TIME FOR THAT LATER, ATLAS. NOW TAKE THE AVENGERS' LEADER SO...
...WE...
...WHAT?>
<SEISMIC SHOCK-WAVES?>
HOW...?!
UHNNN
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, MINERVA...
...WHEN ONE OF THE AVENGERS HAPPENS TO BE AN ELEMENTAL, FIRE, WATER, AIR AND EARTH ARE HERS TO COMMAND.
IMPRESSIVE, GIRL--
SZZZAK
--BUT YOUR FORMIDIBLE DISPLAY OF POWER MARKS YOU AS THE FIRST AVENGER WHO MUST BE ELIMINATED.
CRYSTAL!
DON'T WORRY, CAP--
--A HURRICANE-FORCE BLAST OF WIND--

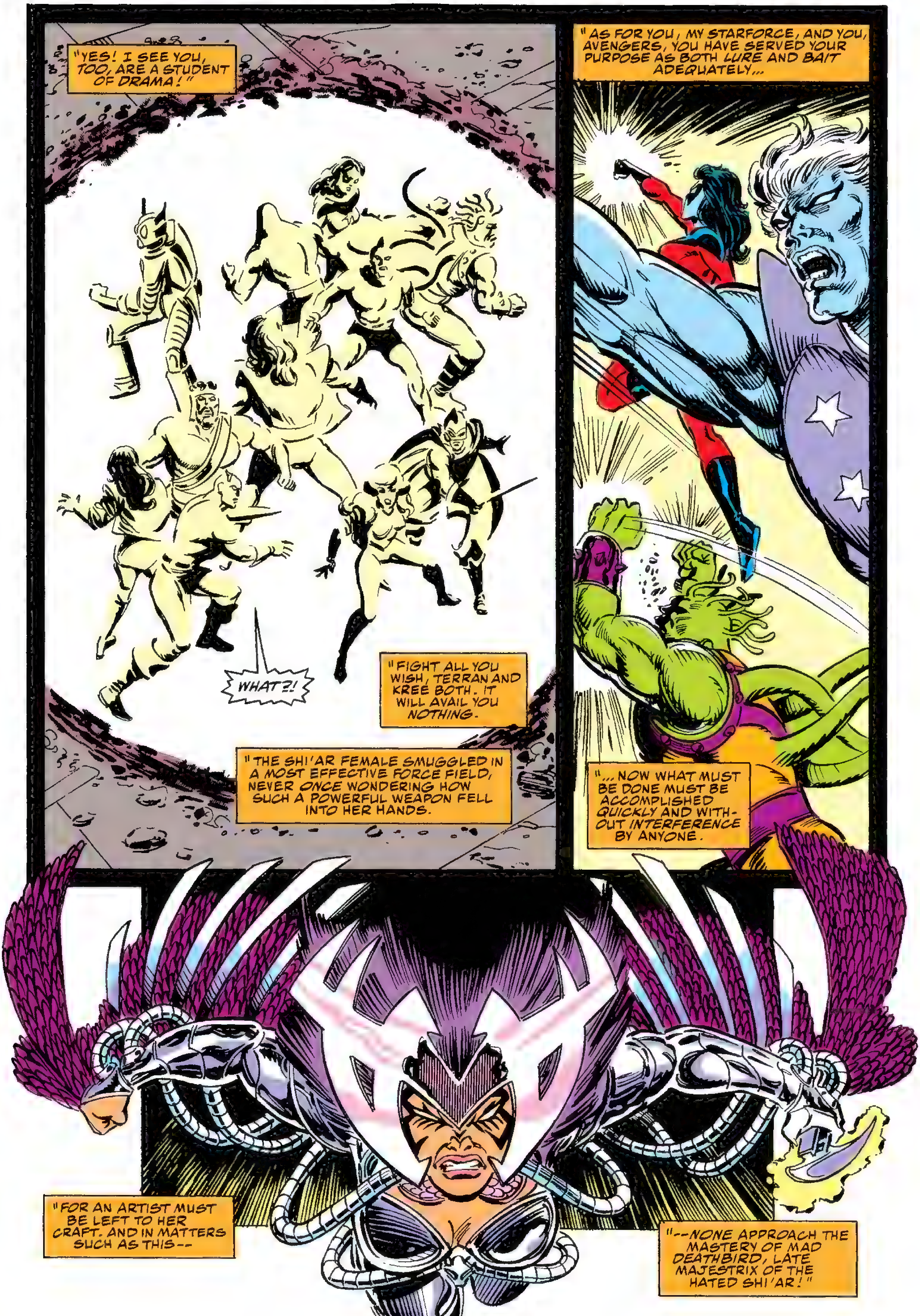

"... AND SHATTERAX IS YESTERDAY'S WORRY!"
YOU'RE QUICK, BLACK KNIGHT! BUT KNOW THIS BATTLE'S END IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION...
...FOR I WAS TRAINED IN THE WAYS OF THE ANCIENT KREE WARRIORS, AND NO ONE IN THE LONG TEST OF HISTORY EVER BESTED THEM!
OOOHH, I'M SCARED, KORATH!
I GUESS I'M SUPPOSED TO SURRENDER IN AWESTRUCK WONDER RIGHT ABOUT NOW, HUH?
YOU MOCK THE KREE?
ONE TOUCH OF MY BETA-BATON WILL WIPE YOUR SMIRK FROM ALL EXISTENCE--
KORATH! BEWARE!!
KRASH
DANE! I'M SO SORRY...
...ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
FRANKLY, CRYS...
...I'M HAVING THE TIME OF MY LIFE!
I WONDER WHAT MY SHRINK WOULD THINK OF THAT!
SUPREMOR, I MUST TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE ONE OF THE LEAST ATTRACTIVE FOES I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.
FSHWASH


AS A MATTER OF FACT, YOU MAKE SOME OF THE *DEVIANTS* I KNOW...
...LOOK DOWNRIGHT *DESIRABLE.*
BASH
CAP, REALITY CHECK.
WITHOUT IRON MAN AND HAWKEYE COMING IN LIKE THE CAVALRY, WE'VE GOT ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES *TOPS* BEFORE STARFORCE OVERWHELMS US.
IT'S TIME FOR *DRASTIC* MEASURES...
FBAM
...I'M SETTING MY NEURAL-SWORD ON *KILL.*
KLIK!
NO!
THE DAY I COUNTENANCE A MOVE LIKE THAT IS THE DAY I *LEAVE* THE AVENGERS!
UNDERSTOOD?
UNDERSTOOD.
WELL, LIVE FAST, DIE YOUNG, LEAVE A NICE-LOOKING CORPSE.
WHAT *MORE* COULD A GUY WANT?
"FIGHT ON, AVENGERS, COME FURTHER INTO MY CITADEL. THE *CRESCENDO* AWAITS..."

"...AND IT WILL BE A CLIMAX *LONG* REMEMBERED!"
<COMMANDERS SUPREME, THE TERRAN AVENGERS ARE ENGAGED IN BATTLE WITH AN UNAUTHORIZED MILITIA *HERE* IN THE CITADEL.>
<SECURITY FORCES HAVE SEALED OFF THE AREA, CONTAINING THE ENCOUNTER NEAR THE GRAND COUNCIL CHAMBERS. WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?>
<BY THE GREAT *PAMA*! HAS THE ENTIRE WORLD GONE *MAD*?!>
<IT IS UNTHINKABLE THAT THESE OUTWORLDERS SHOULD *DEFILE* THE VERY *CORE* OF THE EMPIRE!>
<SO MUCH THEN FOR RONAN'S *PRECIOUS* SCANS! THE ACCUSER'S LIFE IS *FORFEIT* FOR THIS UNMITIGATED *DISGRACE*.>
<AGREED.>
<CLEARLY, *ALL* MEMBERS OF THE OLD REGIME SHOULD HAVE BEEN ERADICATED LONG AGO. IT IS AN OVERSIGHT THAT WE SHALL *NOT* MAKE AGAIN.>
<BUT NOW-- LET US GO TO THE COUNCIL CHAMBER...>
<...AND *SHOW* THESE "AVENGERS" THE *PRICE* THAT MUST BE *PAID* FOR BREAKING KREE LAW!>
"YES, *GO*, MY FEARSOME *POPINJAYS*. WALK *TALL*, RESPLENDENT IN YOUR VESTMENTS OF *POWER* AND *MIGHT*...
"...STRIKE *FEAR* IN THE HEARTS OF *ALL* YOU PASS. IT IS THE WAY OF OUR PEOPLE.
"THE WAY OF THE *KREE*.
"BUT *THIS* TIME, USURPERS, YOU ARE BUT *LAMBS* BEING LED TO THE *SLAUGHTER*."

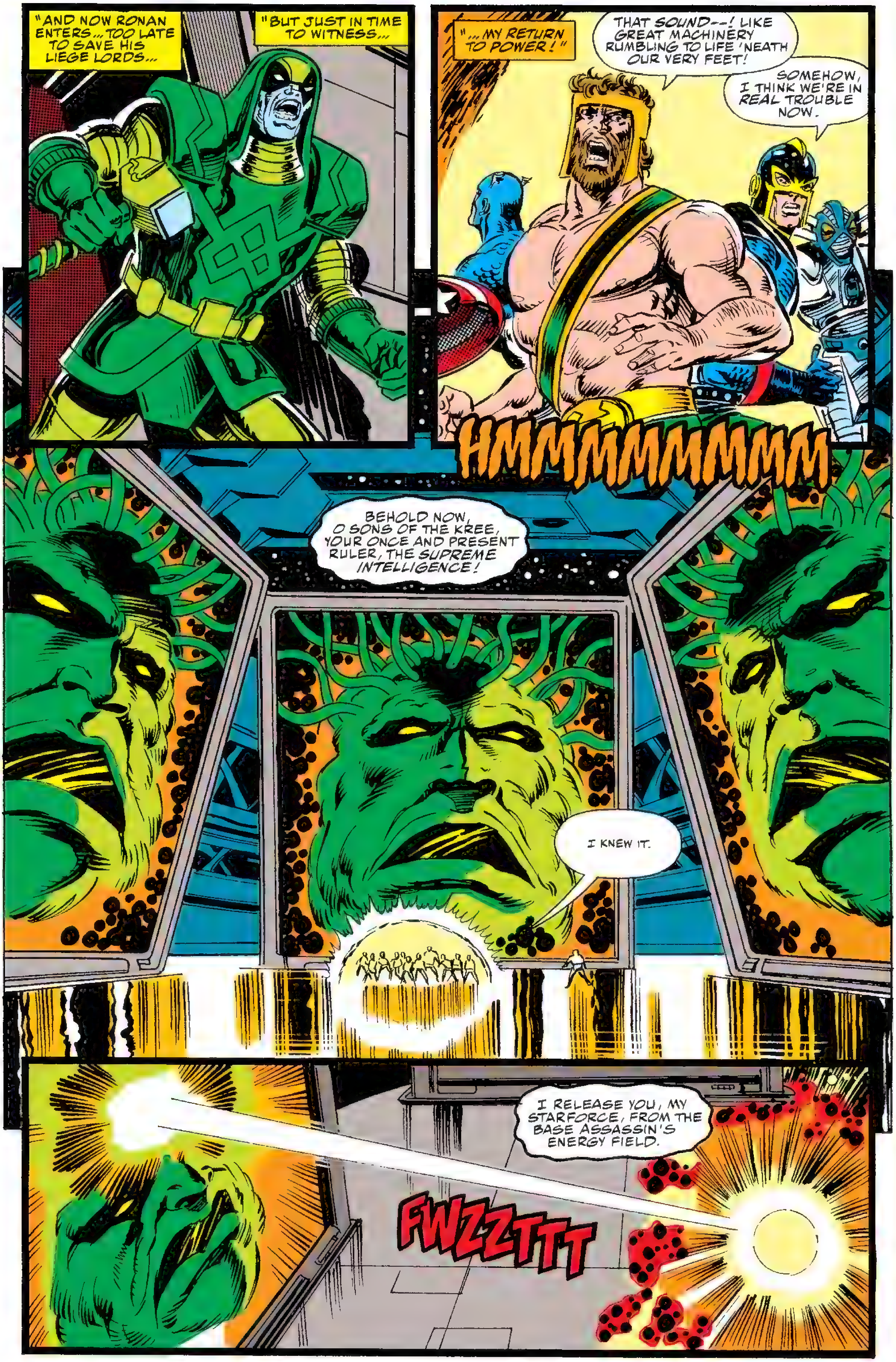

CAPTAIN AMERICA... WE'RE LOSING GROUND! WE'RE FIGHTING A DEFENSIVE BATTLE--
--UNLESS WE TAKE THE OFFENSIVE, WE'RE DOOMED!
KATANG
I'M WELL AWARE OF OUR SITUATION, CRYSTAL!
BELIEVE ME, I'M OPEN TO ANY AND ALL--
--SUGGESTIONS--?!
THEY'VE STOPPED!
WHY?
LOOK UP TOP, CAP!
I THINK THE BIG ENCHILADAS HAVE ARRIVED!

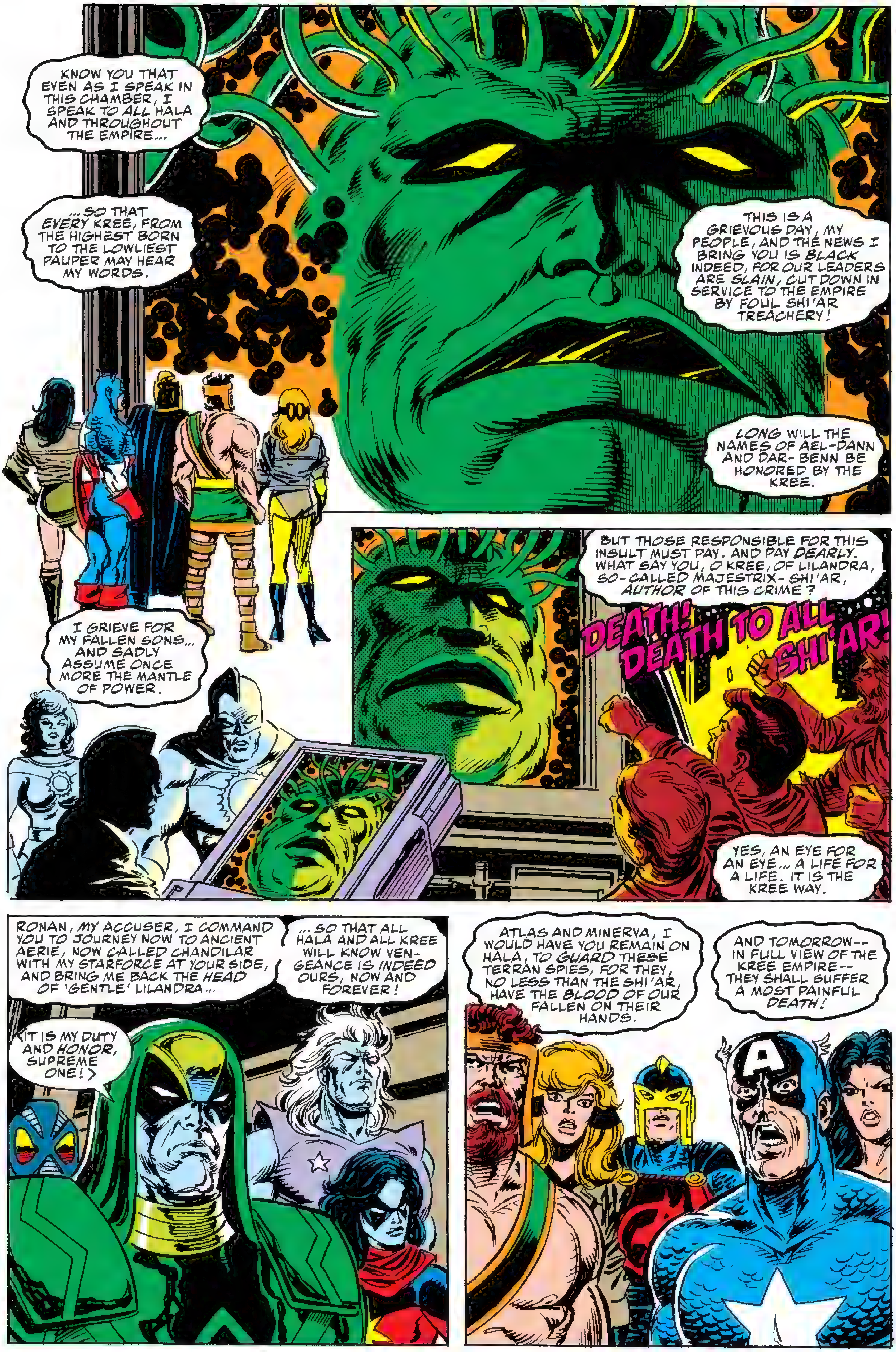
HAVE A *CARE*, EARTHER, IF BY THAT TERMINOLOGY YOU REFER TO *US*.
KNOW YOU--WE ARE AEL-DANN AND DAR-BENN, SONS OF PAMA, GUARDIANS OF SACRED HALA, COMMANDERS SUPREME OF THE IMPERIAL KREE EMPIRE. NONE MAY EVEN *LOOK* UPON US WITHOUT OUR CONSENT.
TELL US NOW, BEFORE YOU ARE EXECUTED, *WHY* HAVE YOU *COME* TO KREE-LAR?
THEY ARE ALLIES OF THE SHI'AR, MY LORDS!
SENT HERE TO MURDER YOU *BOTH*-- HAD WE NOT STOPPED THEM!
INDEED, ATT-LAS?
YOUR PRESENCE HERE IS A *FURTHER* MYSTERY. HOW COMES A HERO OF OUR PEOPLE TO THIS PLACE WITHOUT BENEFIT OF *OUR* SANCTION?
AND MORE... WHO ARE YOUR CONFEDERATES?
SOME ARE *KNOWN* TO US... THE GENETICIST MINERVA... KORATH OF THE DEFUNCT PURSUERS... SHATTERAX...
...BUT THE *OTHER* TWO ARE STRANGERS.
WE FIND THAT PROFOUNDLY *DISTURBING*, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE TENTACLED CREATURE'S RESEMBLANCE TO OUR FALLEN PREDECESSOR.
YOU ARE TO BE *CONGRATULATED* ON CAPTURING THESE SPIES OF THE SHI'AR SLIME, ATT-LAS.
BUT THE LAPSE IN SECURITY IS *UNFORGIVABLE*. YOU SHALL *DIE* WITH THEM.
"AH, IF EVER THERE WAS A *CUE*, DEATHBIRD..."

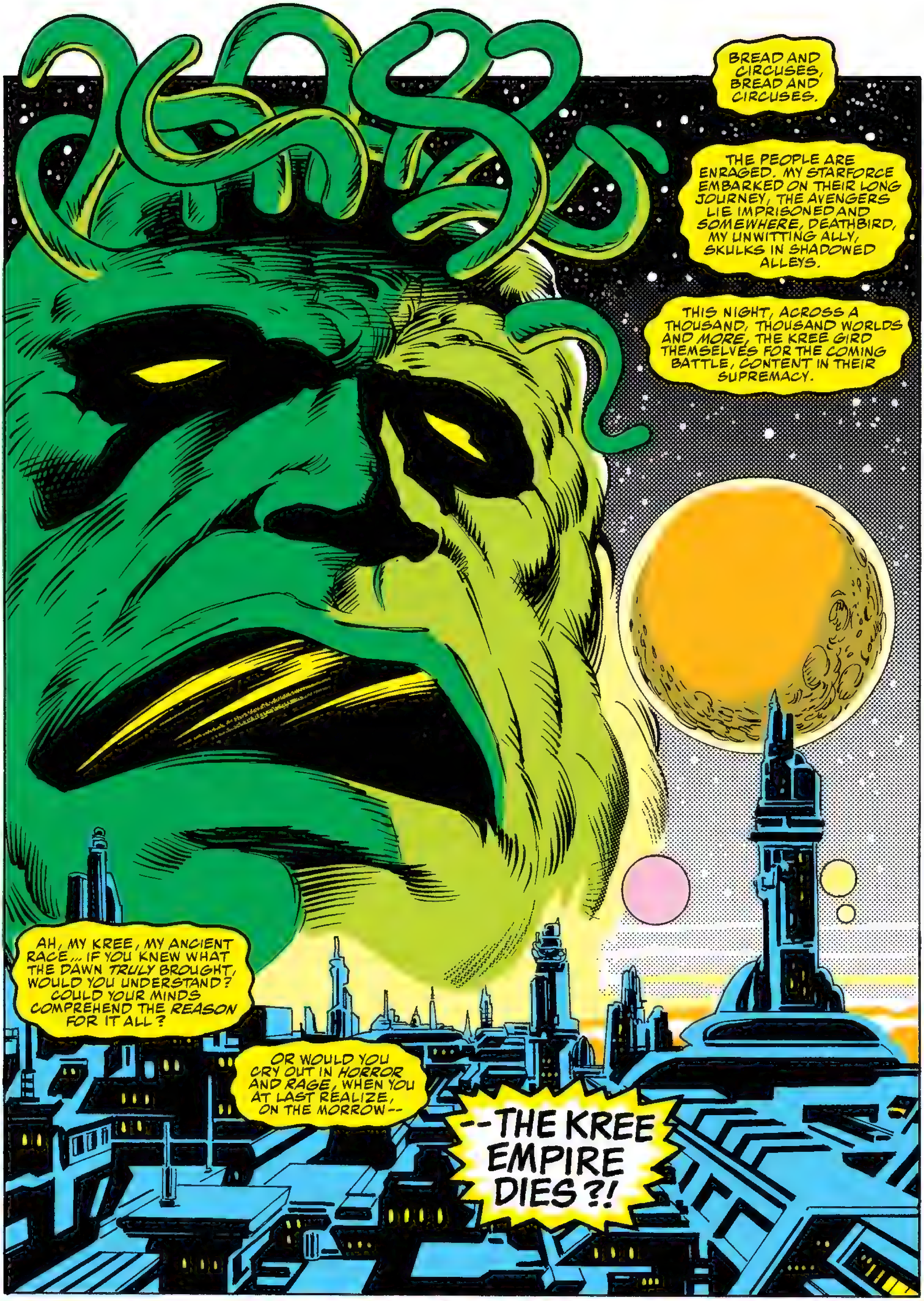

"YES! I SEE YOU, TOO, ARE A STUDENT OF *DRAMA*!"
WHAT?!
"FIGHT ALL YOU WISH, TERRAN AND KREE BOTH. IT WILL AVAIL YOU *NOTHING*.
"THE SHI'AR FEMALE SMUGGLED IN A MOST EFFECTIVE FORCE FIELD, NEVER *ONCE* WONDERING HOW SUCH A POWERFUL WEAPON FELL INTO HER HANDS.
"AS FOR YOU, MY STARFORCE, AND YOU, AVENGERS, YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE AS BOTH *LURE* AND *BAIT* ADEQUATELY...
"...NOW WHAT MUST BE DONE MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED *QUICKLY* AND WITHOUT *INTERFERENCE* BY ANYONE.
"FOR AN ARTIST MUST BE LEFT TO HER CRAFT. AND IN MATTERS SUCH AS THIS--
"--*NONE* APPROACH THE MASTERY OF MAD DEATHBIRD, LATE MAJESTRIX OF THE HATED SHI'AR!"

‹GREETINGS, O SONS OF PAMA, O SCIONS OF HALA--
--CONTEMPTIBLE BLOODWARTS!›
‹LOOK LONG UPON THE LAST SIGHT YOU SHALL EVER SEE!›
‹YOU--HERE?!›
‹IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!›
‹NO--NOT FOR A SHI'AR--
--NOT WHEN THE BLOOD OF THE AERIE CRY OUT FOR VENGEANCE!›
SLASHH
‹YOUR EMPIRE SHALL FALL BEFORE US--
--AS EASILY AS I CREPT ONTO IMPERVIOUS HALA--
--REMEMBER THAT, AEL-DANN--
--AS YOU DIE!›
ARRGH!
‹ARE YOU AFRAID, KREEMAN?›
‹YOU SHOULD BE.›
‹I FACE MY FATE AS A KREE SOLDIER...
...AND SPIT ON ALL THINGS SHI'AR.›

‹HOW *TYPICALLY* KREE, THEN-- TO DIE WITH EMPTY BOASTS ON TREMBLING LIPS!›
ARRGH!
CHUNKT
‹SO ENDS YOUR 'GLORIOUS' JOINT-REIGN. GO NOW TO YOUR AFTERLIFE, IF YOU HAVE ONE--
--I CARE NOT.›
"IT IS ACCOMPLISHED. IN BUT A FEW BEATS OF A HEART... *EVERYTHING* HAS CHANGED.
SMASHH
"WHERE NOW, MY GENERALS, ARE THE *VANITIES* OF POWER AND STATION? WHAT *GOOD* DID THEY DO YOU?
"NONE. YOUR REACH EXCEEDED YOUR GRASP, SONS OF PAMA...
"...AND ALL THAT IS LEFT IS THE QUINTESSENCE OF *DUST*."
BY AGON...
...WHO *IS* THAT CREATURE?
A DEMON, METHINKS.
HEAR ME, PEOPLE OF HALA -- THIS IS BUT A *WARNING*!
YOUR LEADERS *PAID* FOR THEIR CRIMES AGAINST THE AERIE. SUCH WILL BE THE FATE OF *ALL* KREE IF THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM SUFFERS ANY *FURTHER* ASSAULT.
MARK MY WORDS WELL AND *FEAR* THEM--
--FOR WE HAVE POWER *UNDREAMT* OF!
BEWARE IT!


"AND NOW RONAN ENTERS... TOO LATE TO SAVE HIS LIEGE LORDS...
"BUT JUST IN TIME TO WITNESS...
"...MY RETURN TO POWER!"
THAT SOUND--! LIKE GREAT MACHINERY RUMBLING TO LIFE 'NEATH OUR VERY FEET!
SOMEHOW, I THINK WE'RE IN REAL TROUBLE NOW.
HMMMMMMMMM
BEHOLD NOW, O SONS OF THE KREE, YOUR ONCE AND PRESENT RULER, THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE!
I KNEW IT.
I RELEASE YOU, MY STARFORCE, FROM THE BASE ASSASSIN'S ENERGY FIELD.
FWZZTTT


KNOW YOU THAT EVEN AS I SPEAK IN THIS CHAMBER, I SPEAK TO *ALL* HALA AND THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE...
...SO THAT *EVERY* KREE, FROM THE HIGHEST BORN TO THE LOWLIEST PAUPER MAY HEAR MY WORDS.
THIS IS A GRIEVOUS DAY, MY PEOPLE, AND THE NEWS I BRING YOU IS *BLACK* INDEED, FOR OUR LEADERS ARE *SLAIN*, CUT DOWN IN SERVICE TO THE EMPIRE BY FOUL SHI'AR TREACHERY!
LONG WILL THE NAMES OF AEL-DANN AND DAR-BENN BE HONORED BY THE KREE.
I GRIEVE FOR MY FALLEN SONS... AND SADLY ASSUME ONCE MORE THE MANTLE OF POWER.
BUT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS INSULT MUST PAY. AND PAY *DEARLY*. WHAT SAY YOU, O KREE, OF LILANDRA, SO-CALLED MAJESTRIX-SHI'AR, *AUTHOR* OF THIS CRIME?
DEATH! DEATH TO ALL SHI'AR!
YES, AN EYE FOR AN EYE... A LIFE FOR A LIFE. IT IS THE KREE WAY.
RONAN, *MY ACCUSER*, I COMMAND YOU TO JOURNEY NOW TO ANCIENT AERIE, NOW CALLED CHANDILAR WITH MY STARFORCE AT YOUR SIDE, AND BRING ME BACK THE *HEAD* OF 'GENTLE' LILANDRA...
...SO THAT ALL HALA AND ALL KREE WILL KNOW VENGEANCE IS *INDEED* OURS, NOW AND FOREVER!
<IT IS MY DUTY AND *HONOR*, SUPREME ONE!>
ATLAS AND MINERVA, I WOULD HAVE YOU REMAIN ON HALA, *TO GUARD* THESE TERRAN SPIES, FOR THEY, NO LESS THAN THE SHI'AR, HAVE THE *BLOOD OF OUR* FALLEN ON THEIR HANDS.
AND TOMORROW-- IN FULL VIEW OF THE KREE EMPIRE-- THEY SHALL SUFFER A MOST PAINFUL *DEATH*!


BREAD AND CIRCUSES, BREAD AND CIRCUSES.
THE PEOPLE ARE ENRAGED. MY STARFORCE EMBARKED ON THEIR LONG JOURNEY, THE AVENGERS LIE IMPRISONED AND SOMEWHERE, DEATHBIRD, MY UNWITTING ALLY, SKULKS IN SHADOWED ALLEYS.
THIS NIGHT, ACROSS A THOUSAND, THOUSAND WORLDS AND MORE, THE KREE GIRD THEMSELVES FOR THE COMING BATTLE, CONTENT IN THEIR SUPREMACY.
AH, MY KREE, MY ANCIENT RACE... IF YOU KNEW WHAT THE DAWN TRULY BROUGHT, WOULD YOU UNDERSTAND? COULD YOUR MINDS COMPREHEND THE REASON FOR IT ALL?
OR WOULD YOU CRY OUT IN HORROR AND RAGE, WHEN YOU AT LAST REALIZE, ON THE MORROW--
--THE KREE EMPIRE DIES?!

NEXT: CHAPTER 13 IN *IRON MAN #274!* AND JOIN US HERE NEXT MONTH FOR THE EXPLOSIVE (AND WE DO MEAN *EXPLOSIVE*) GIANT-SIZED FINALE TO *GALACTIC STORM*...

ANNIHILATION!

THE AVENGERS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME!

MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 13
IRON MAN
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$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN / UK 70p
279
APR
02454
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
CAPTIVE OF THE KREE!
JUDGEMENT ON HALA!
GUEST VILLAINY WITH RONAN THE ACCUSER!
RYAN/WIACEK

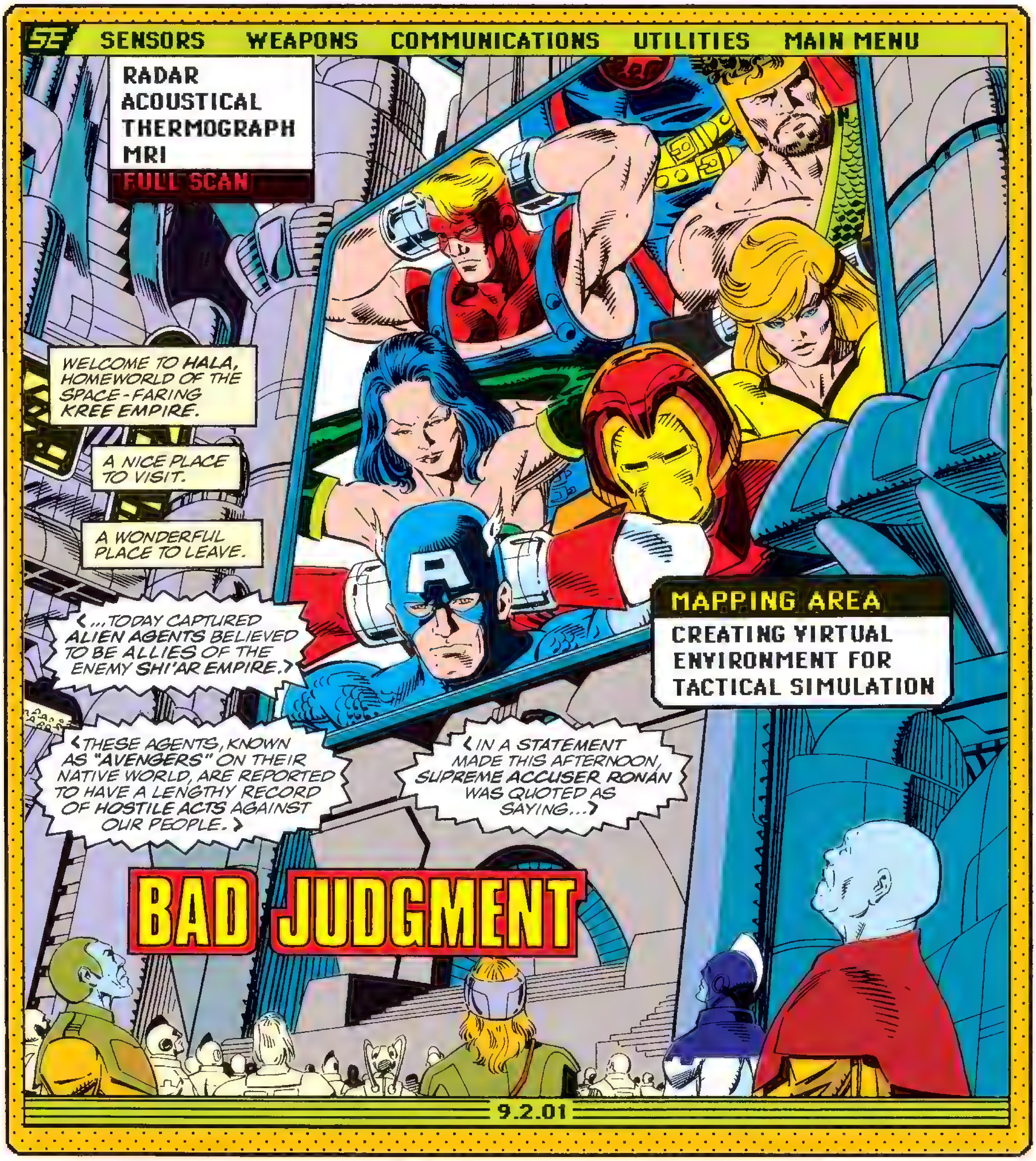
Stan Lee PRESENTS:

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

PART 13

IRON MAN

*AN ENVOY OF **AVENGERS** HAS JOURNEYED TO THE ALIEN **KREE EMPIRE** TO TRY TO STOP THE KREE FROM WAGING WAR WITH THE **SHI'AR**, ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES ACCUSED OF AIDING AND ABETTING THE ASSASSINATION OF THE TWO SUPREME COMMANDERS OF THE KREE! THE SENTENCE: DEATH! UNLESS GOLIATH AND IRON MAN CAN SAVE THEM. . . !*


SENSORS WEAPONS COMMUNICATIONS UTILITIES MAIN MENU
RADAR
ACOUSTICAL
THERMOGRAPH
MRI
FULL SCAN
WELCOME TO HALA, HOMEWORLD OF THE SPACE-FARING KREE EMPIRE.
A NICE PLACE TO VISIT.
A WONDERFUL PLACE TO LEAVE.
‹...TODAY CAPTURED ALIEN AGENTS BELIEVED TO BE ALLIES OF THE ENEMY SHI'AR EMPIRE.›
MAPPING AREA
CREATING VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT FOR TACTICAL SIMULATION
‹THESE AGENTS, KNOWN AS "AVENGERS" ON THEIR NATIVE WORLD, ARE REPORTED TO HAVE A LENGTHY RECORD OF HOSTILE ACTS AGAINST OUR PEOPLE.›
‹IN A STATEMENT MADE THIS AFTERNOON, SUPREME ACCUSER RONAN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING...›
BAD JUDGMENT
9.2.01

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PAUL RYAN PENCILER
BOB WIACEK & KEITH WILLIAMS INKERS
MICHAEL HEISLER LETTERER
MIKE ROCKWITZ COLORIST
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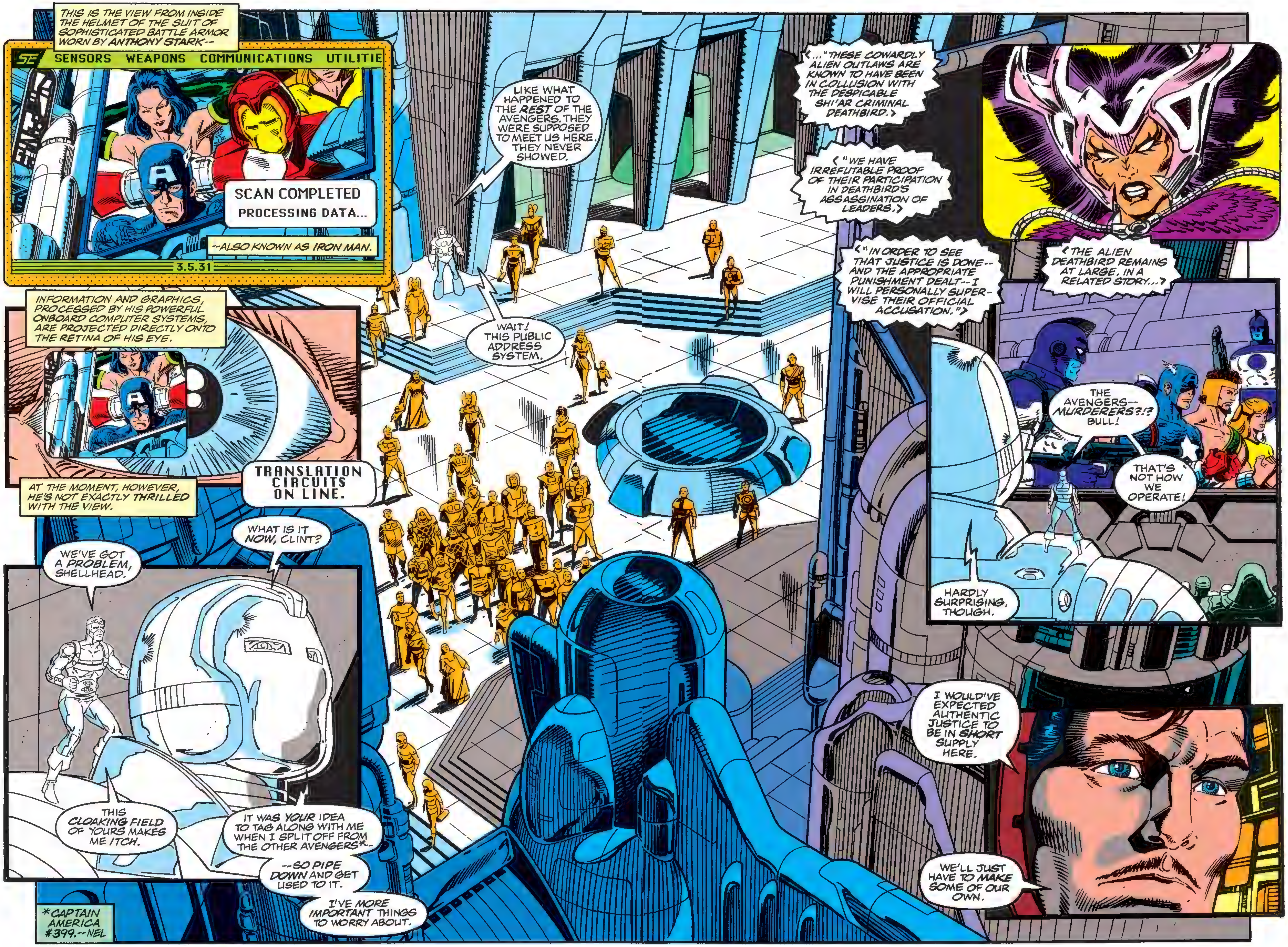
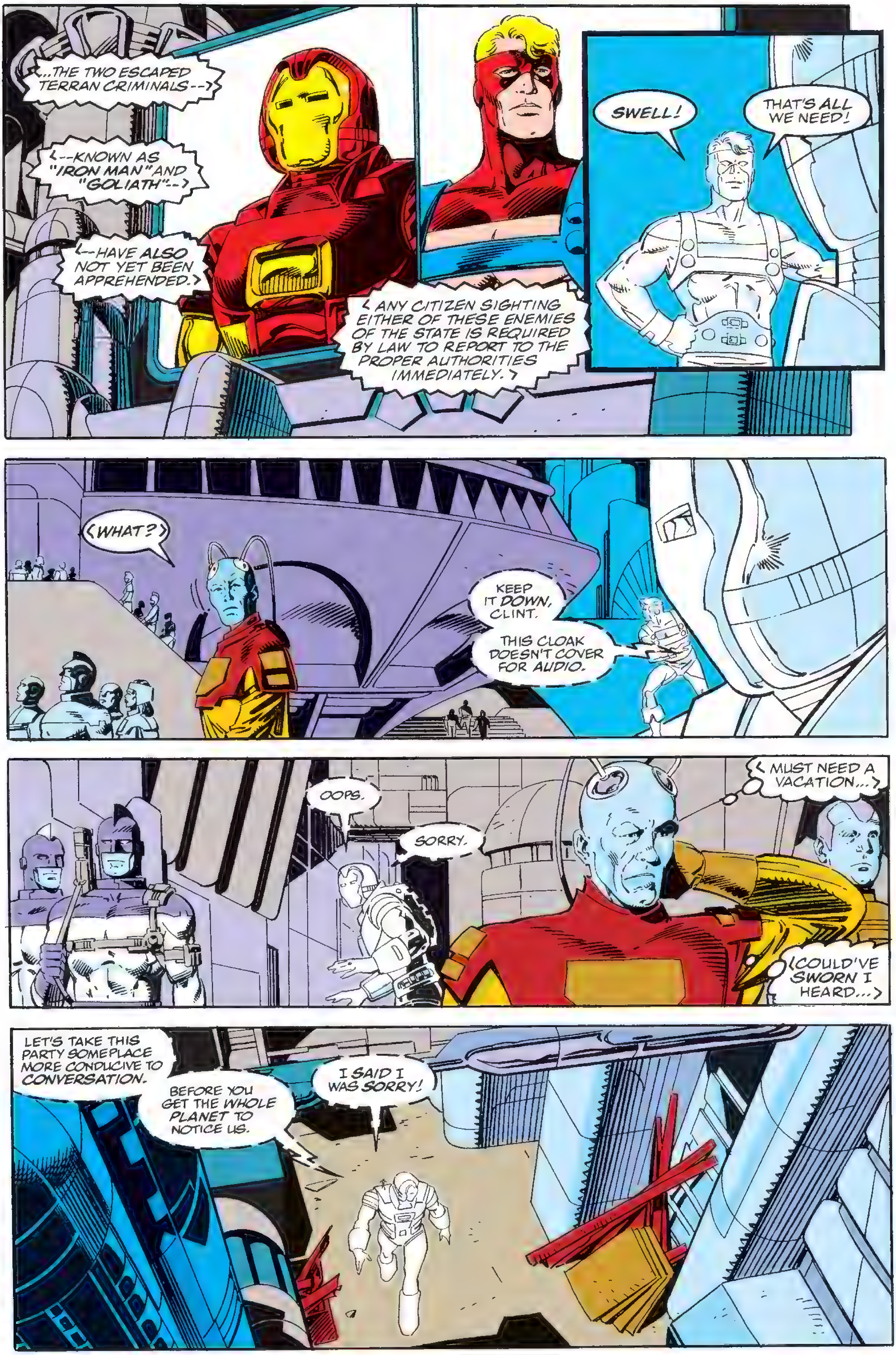
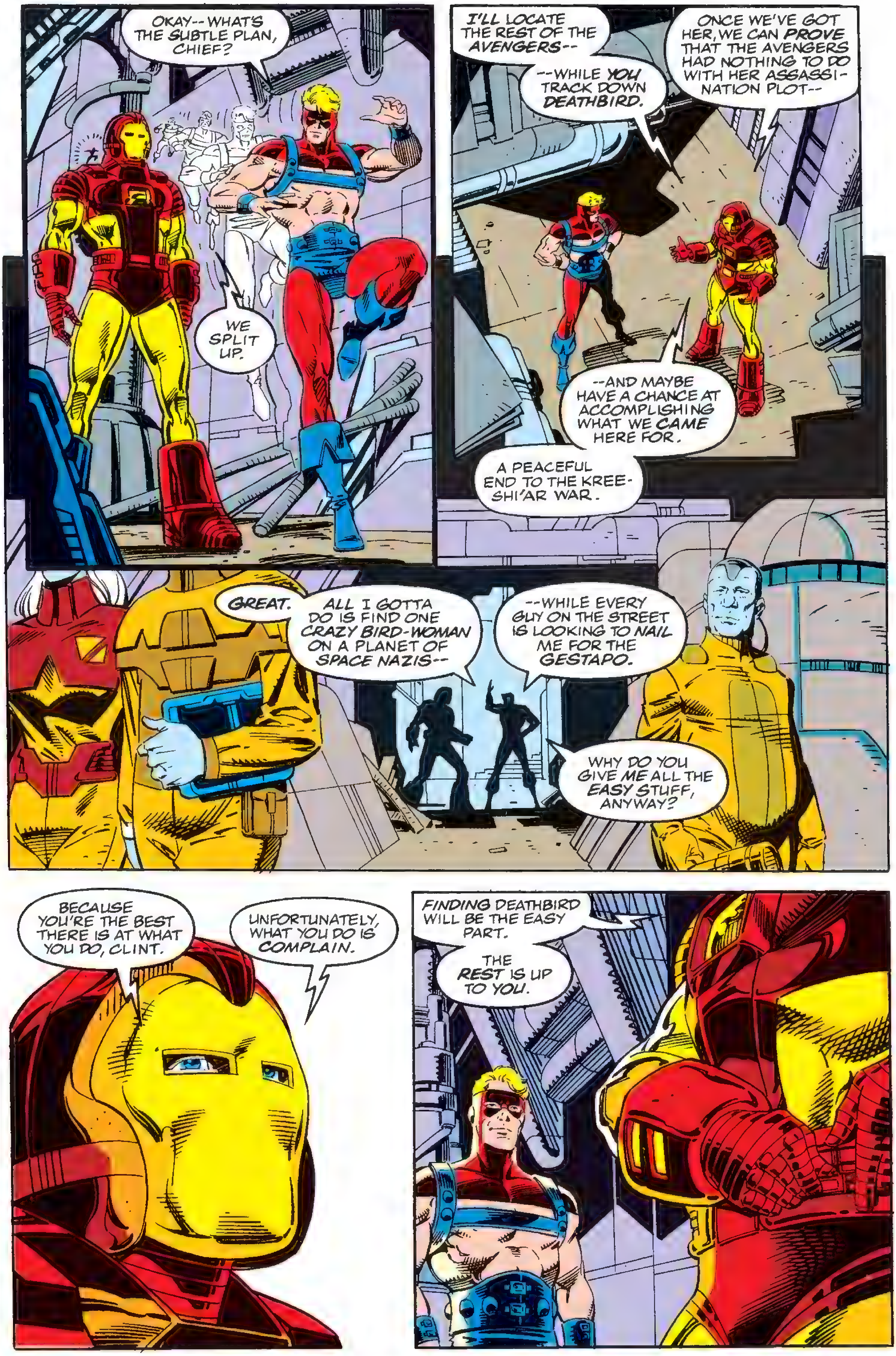
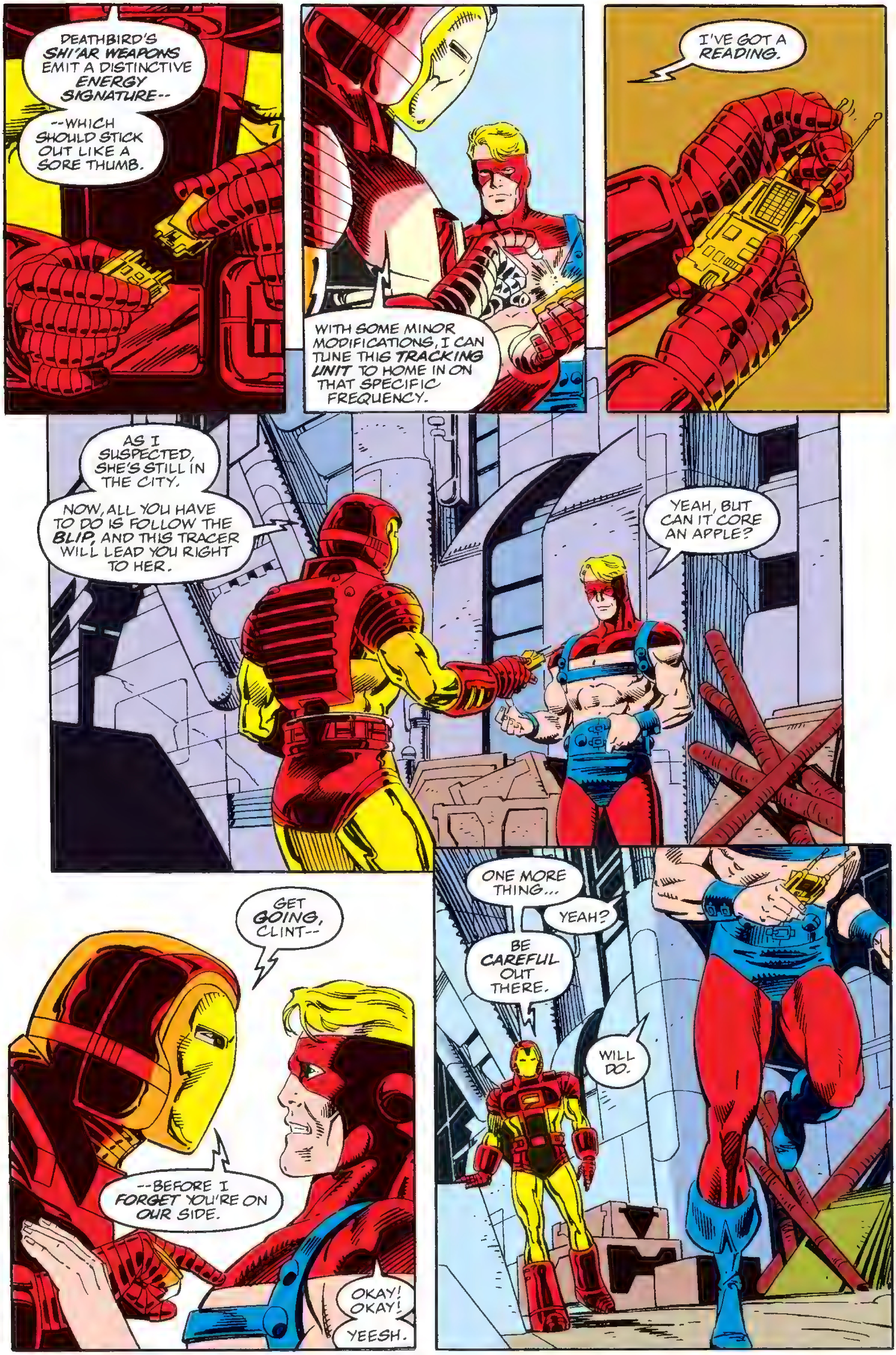
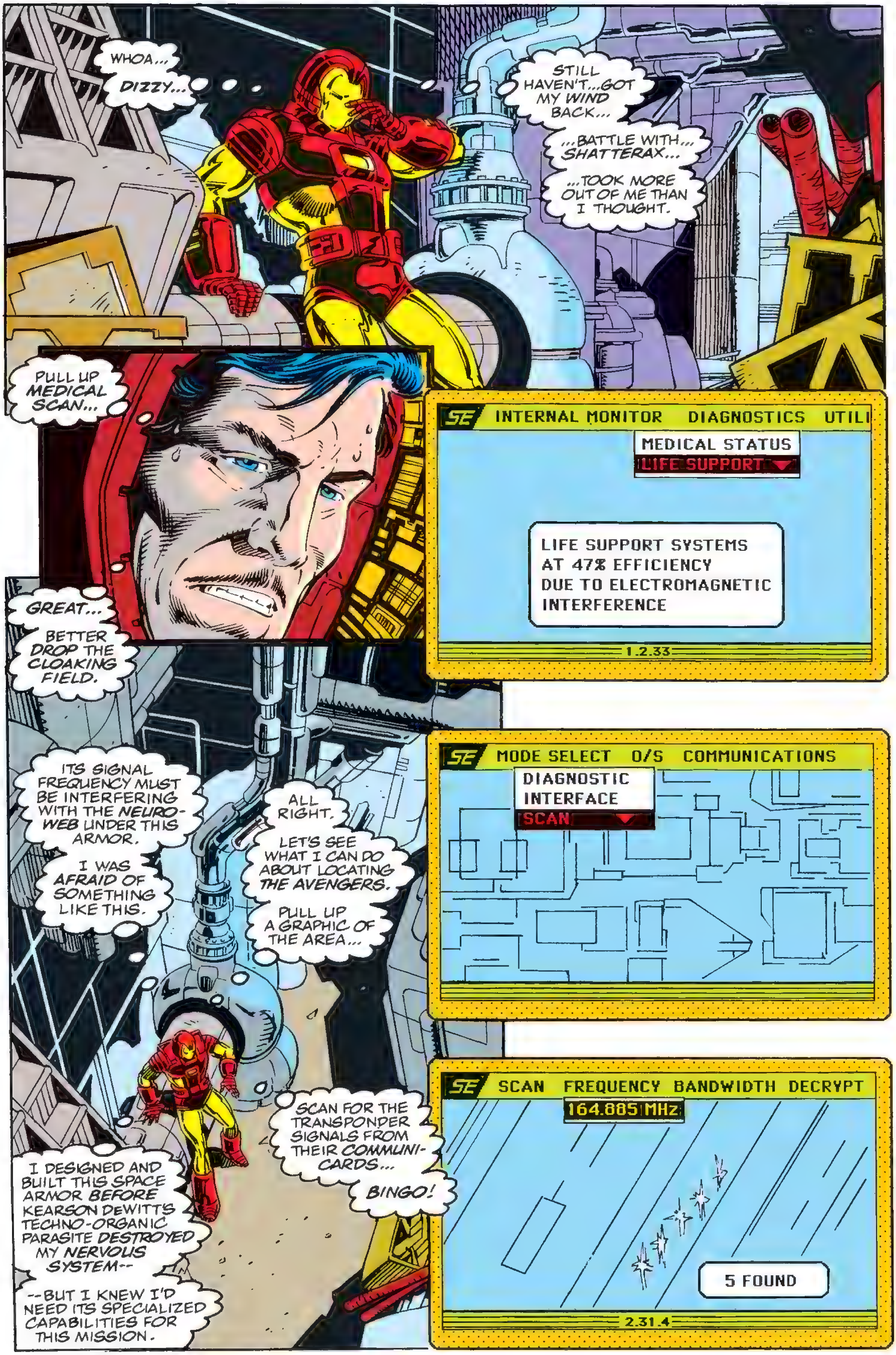
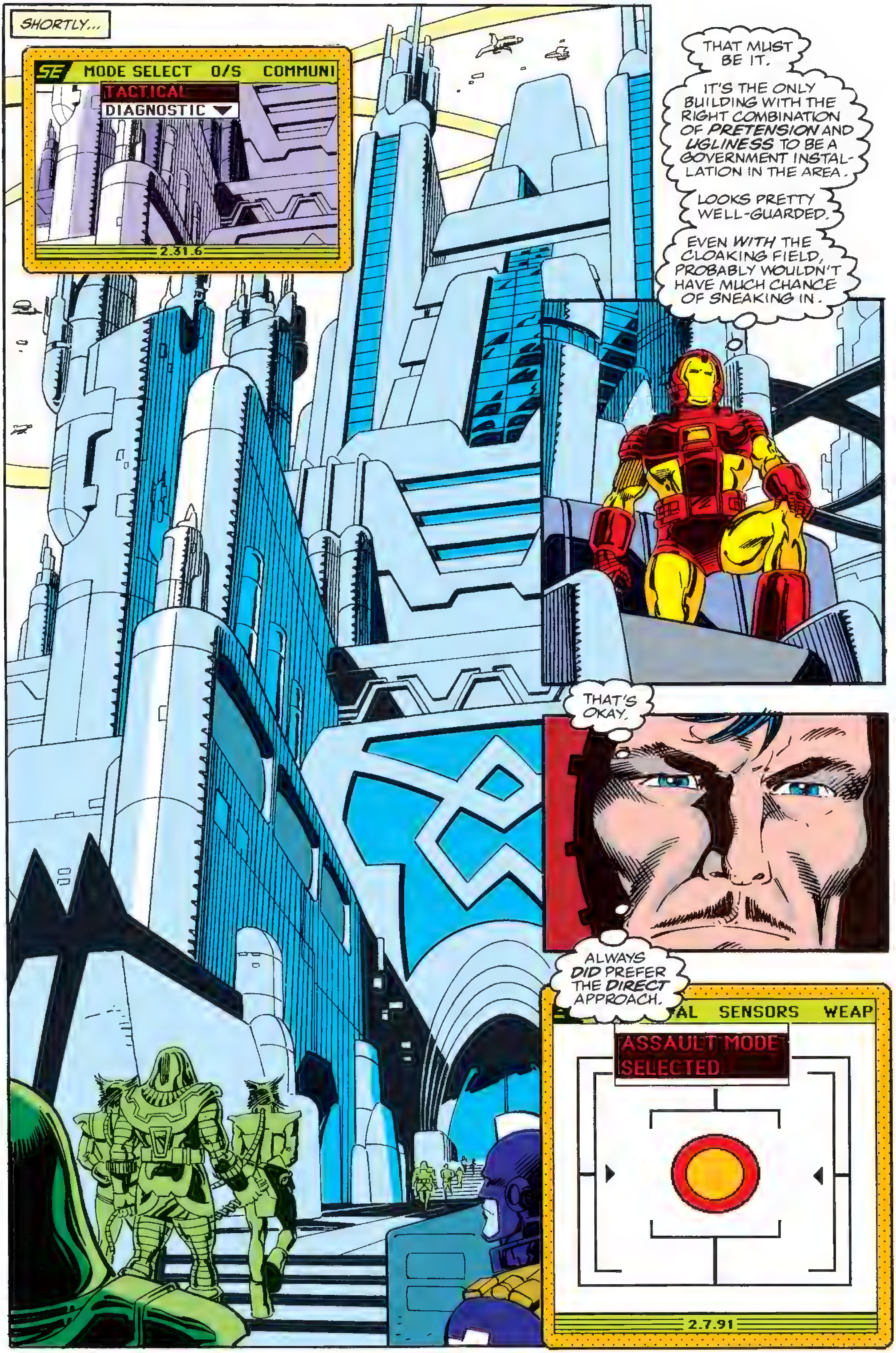

THIS IS THE VIEW FROM INSIDE THE HELMET OF THE SUIT OF SOPHISTICATED BATTLE ARMOR WORN BY ANTHONY STARK--
SE SENSORS WEAPONS COMMUNICATIONS UTILITIE
SCAN COMPLETED PROCESSING DATA...
--ALSO KNOWN AS IRON MAN.
3.5.31
INFORMATION AND GRAPHICS, PROCESSED BY HIS POWERFUL ONBOARD COMPUTER SYSTEMS, ARE PROJECTED DIRECTLY ONTO THE RETINA OF HIS EYE.
AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, HE'S NOT EXACTLY THRILLED WITH THE VIEW.
TRANSLATION CIRCUITS ON LINE.
WHAT IS IT NOW, CLINT?
WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM, SHELLHEAD.
THIS CLOAKING FIELD OF YOURS MAKES ME ITCH.
IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO TAG ALONG WITH ME WHEN I SPLIT OFF FROM THE OTHER AVENGERS*--
--SO PIPE DOWN AND GET USED TO IT.
I'VE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT.
*CAPTAIN AMERICA #399.--NEL
LIKE WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REST OF THE AVENGERS. THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO MEET US HERE. THEY NEVER SHOWED.
WAIT! THIS PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM.
<..."THESE COWARDLY ALIEN OUTLAWS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN IN COLLUSION WITH THE DESPICABLE SHI'AR CRIMINAL DEATHBIRD.>
<"WE HAVE IRREFUTABLE PROOF OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DEATHBIRD'S ASSASSINATION OF LEADERS.>
<"IN ORDER TO SEE THAT JUSTICE IS DONE--AND THE APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT DEALT--I WILL PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THEIR OFFICIAL ACCUSATION.">
<THE ALIEN DEATHBIRD REMAINS AT LARGE, IN A RELATED STORY...>
THE AVENGERS--MURDERERS?!? BULL!
THAT'S NOT HOW WE OPERATE!
HARDLY SURPRISING, THOUGH.
I WOULD'VE EXPECTED AUTHENTIC JUSTICE TO BE IN SHORT SUPPLY HERE.
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE SOME OF OUR OWN.

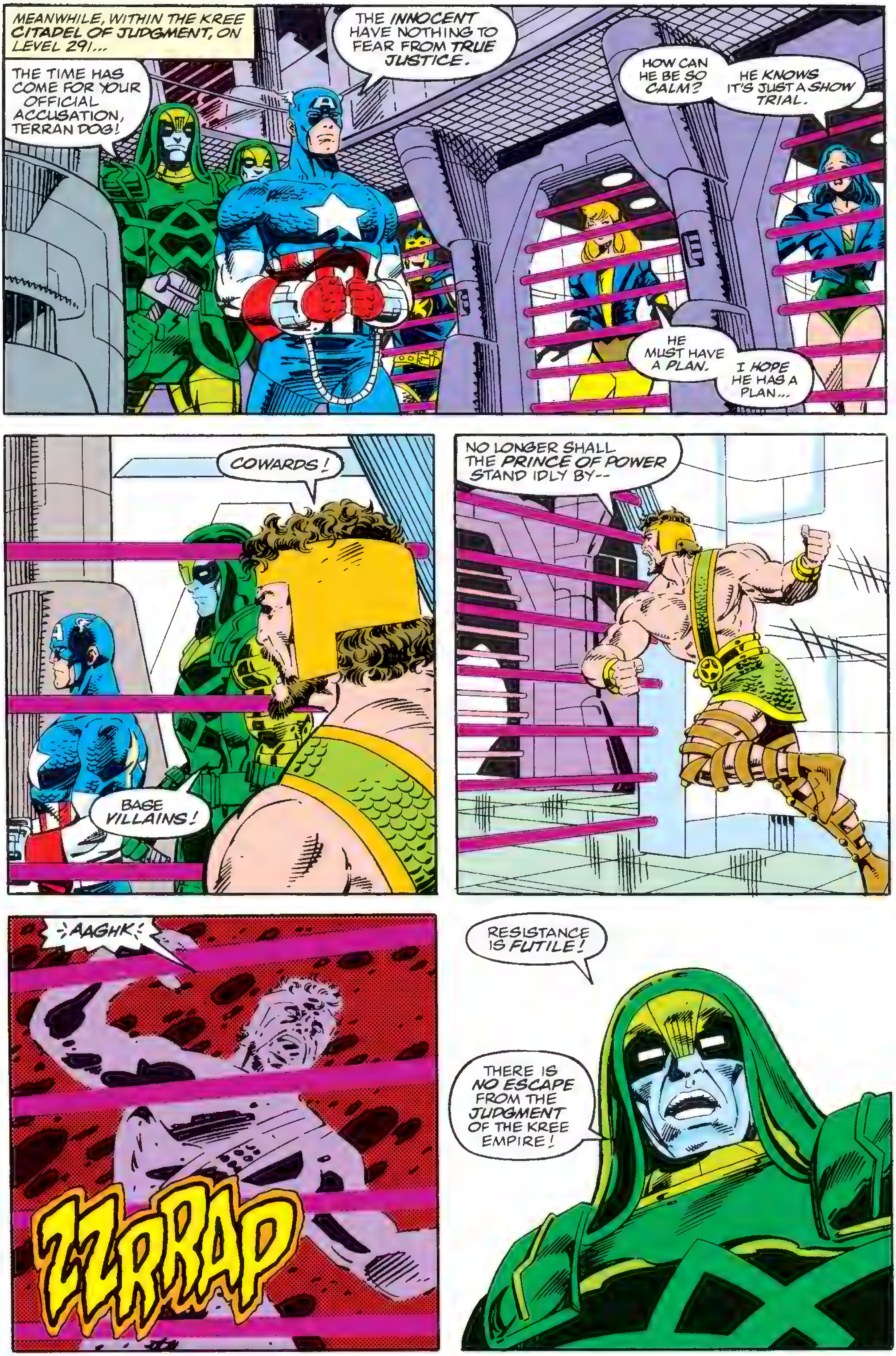

‹...THE TWO ESCAPED TERRAN CRIMINALS--›
‹--KNOWN AS "IRON MAN" AND "GOLIATH"--›
‹--HAVE ALSO NOT YET BEEN APPREHENDED.›
‹ANY CITIZEN SIGHTING EITHER OF THESE ENEMIES OF THE STATE IS REQUIRED BY LAW TO REPORT TO THE PROPER AUTHORITIES IMMEDIATELY.›
SWELL!
THAT'S ALL WE NEED!
‹WHAT?›
KEEP IT DOWN, CLINT.
THIS CLOAK DOESN'T COVER FOR AUDIO.
OOPS.
SORRY.
‹MUST NEED A VACATION...›
‹COULD'VE SWORN I HEARD...›
LET'S TAKE THIS PARTY SOMEPLACE MORE CONDUCIVE TO CONVERSATION.
BEFORE YOU GET THE WHOLE PLANET TO NOTICE US.
I SAID I WAS SORRY!

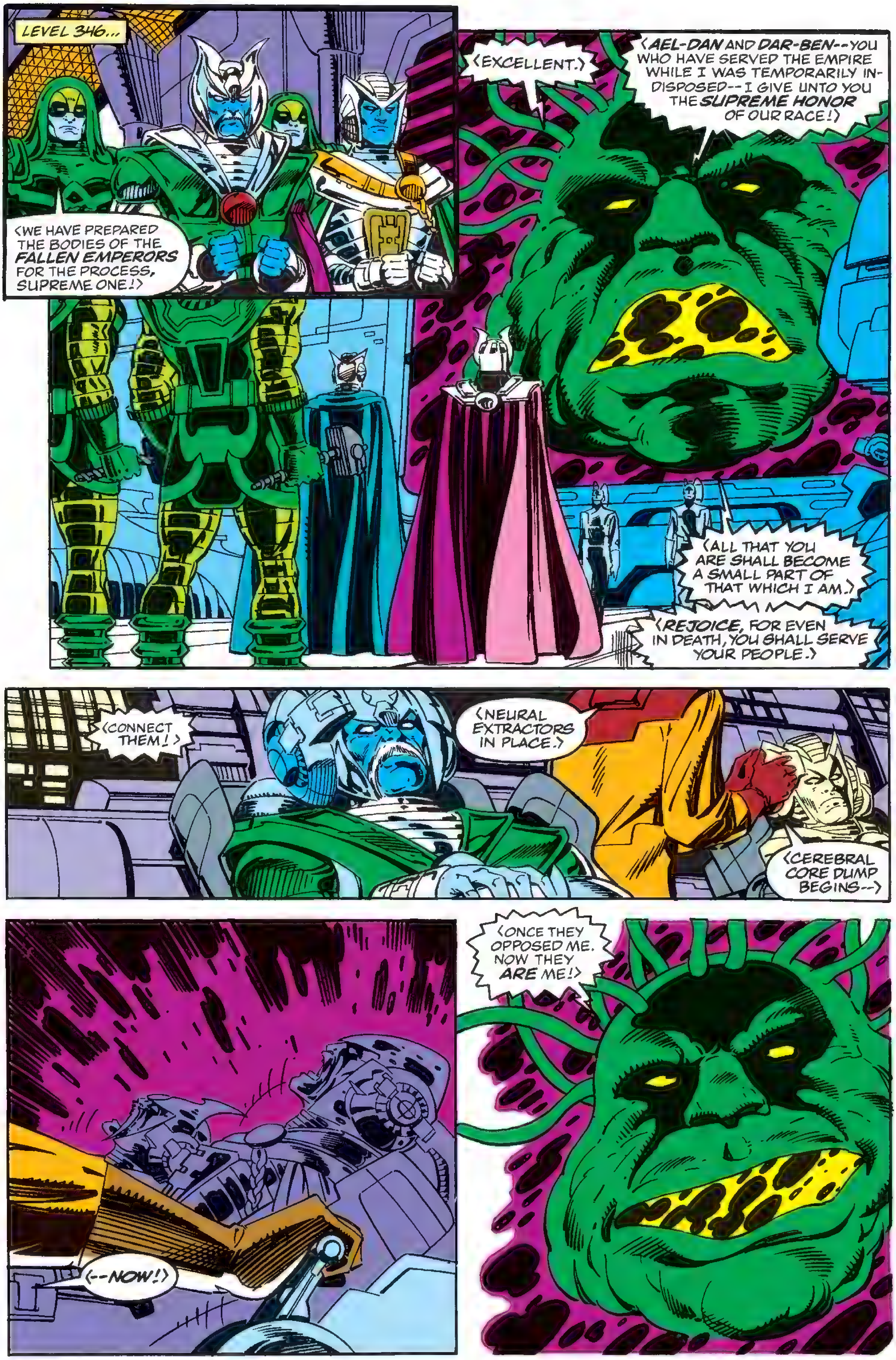

OKAY--WHAT'S THE SUBTLE PLAN, CHIEF?
WE SPLIT UP.
I'LL LOCATE THE REST OF THE AVENGERS--
--WHILE YOU TRACK DOWN DEATHBIRD.
ONCE WE'VE GOT HER, WE CAN PROVE THAT THE AVENGERS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH HER ASSASSINATION PLOT--
--AND MAYBE HAVE A CHANCE AT ACCOMPLISHING WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR.
A PEACEFUL END TO THE KREE-SHI'AR WAR.
GREAT.
ALL I GOTTA DO IS FIND ONE CRAZY BIRD-WOMAN ON A PLANET OF SPACE NAZIS--
--WHILE EVERY GUY ON THE STREET IS LOOKING TO NAIL ME FOR THE GESTAPO.
WHY DO YOU GIVE ME ALL THE EASY STUFF, ANYWAY?
BECAUSE YOU'RE THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT YOU DO, CLINT.
UNFORTUNATELY, WHAT YOU DO IS COMPLAIN.
FINDING DEATHBIRD WILL BE THE EASY PART.
THE REST IS UP TO YOU.

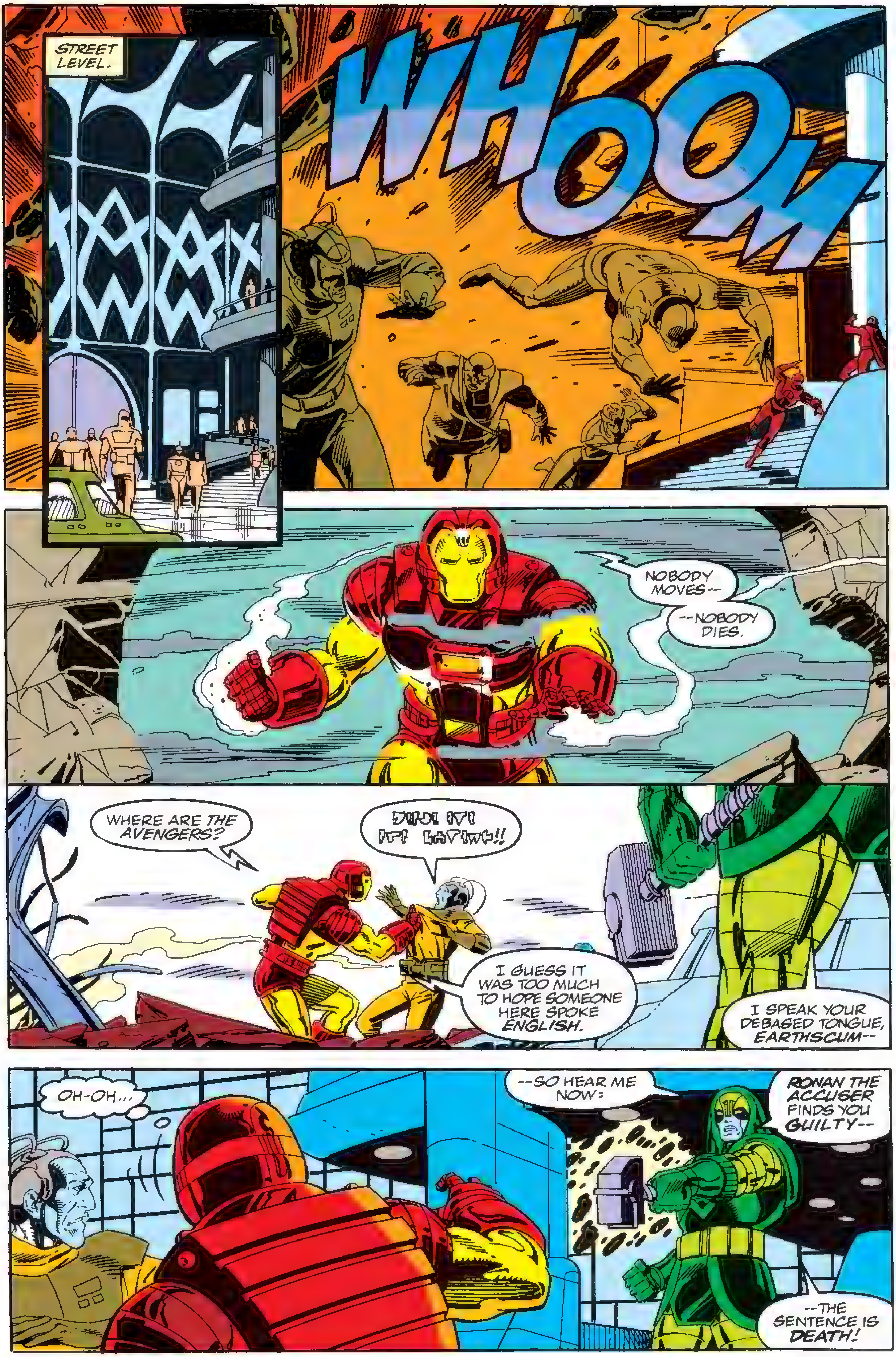

DEATHBIRD'S SHI'AR WEAPONS EMIT A DISTINCTIVE ENERGY SIGNATURE--
--WHICH SHOULD STICK OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB.
WITH SOME MINOR MODIFICATIONS, I CAN TUNE THIS TRACKING UNIT TO HOME IN ON THAT SPECIFIC FREQUENCY.
I'VE GOT A READING.
AS I SUSPECTED, SHE'S STILL IN THE CITY.
NOW, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FOLLOW THE BLIP, AND THIS TRACER WILL LEAD YOU RIGHT TO HER.
YEAH, BUT CAN IT CORE AN APPLE?
GET GOING, CLINT--
--BEFORE I FORGET YOU'RE ON OUR SIDE.
OKAY! OKAY!
YEESH.
ONE MORE THING...
YEAH?
BE CAREFUL OUT THERE.
WILL DO.

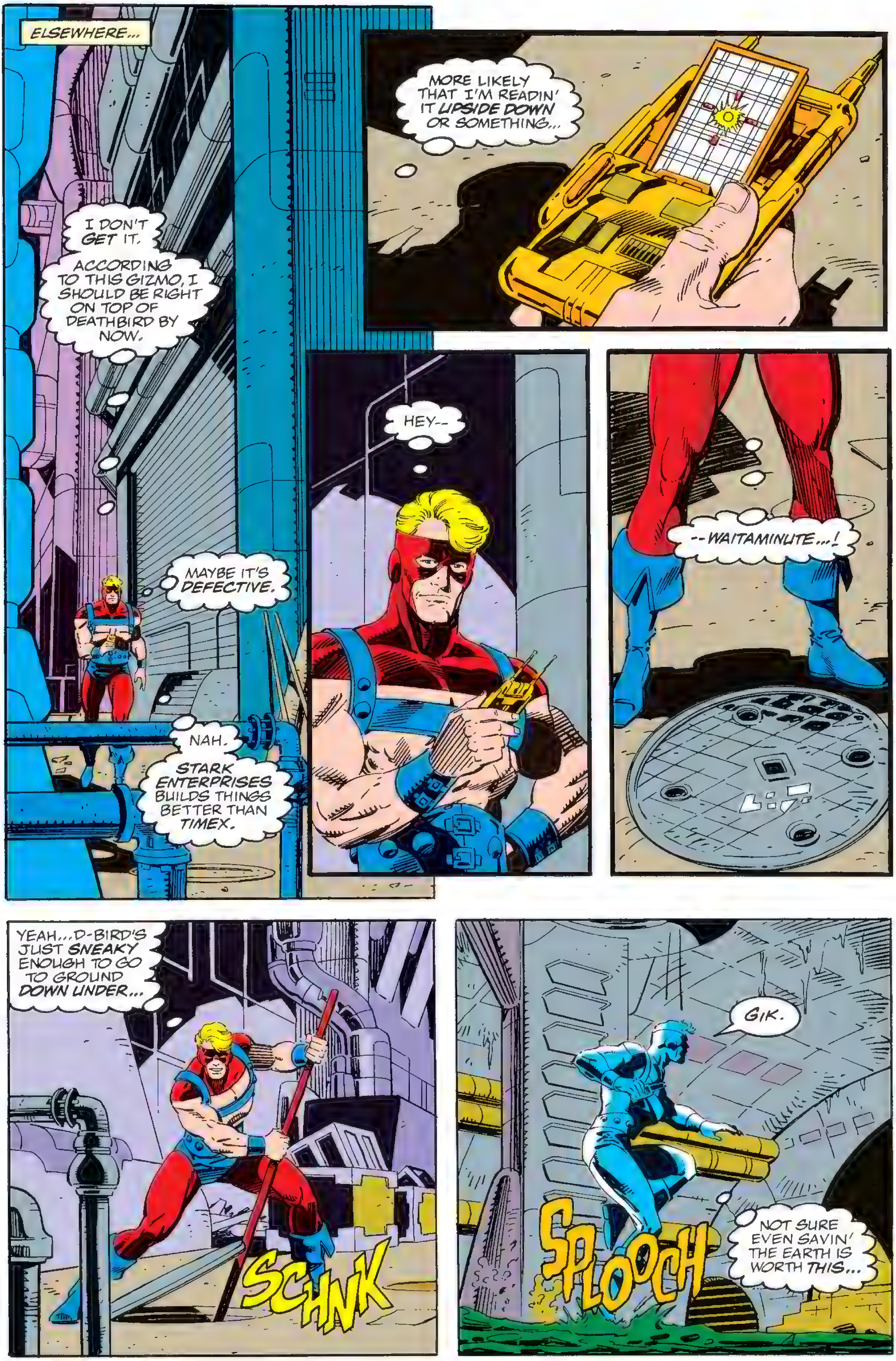

WHOA... DIZZY...
STILL HAVEN'T...GOT MY WIND BACK...
...BATTLE WITH... SHATTERAX...
...TOOK MORE OUT OF ME THAN I THOUGHT.
PULL UP MEDICAL SCAN...
INTERNAL MONITOR DIAGNOSTICS UTILI
MEDICAL STATUS
LIFE SUPPORT
LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS AT 47% EFFICIENCY DUE TO ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERFERENCE
1.2.33
GREAT...
BETTER DROP THE CLOAKING FIELD.
ITS SIGNAL FREQUENCY MUST BE INTERFERING WITH THE NEURO-WEB UNDER THIS ARMOR.
I WAS AFRAID OF SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
ALL RIGHT.
LET'S SEE WHAT I CAN DO ABOUT LOCATING THE AVENGERS.
PULL UP A GRAPHIC OF THE AREA...
MODE SELECT O/S COMMUNICATIONS
DIAGNOSTIC
INTERFACE
SCAN
SCAN FOR THE TRANSPONDER SIGNALS FROM THEIR COMMUNI-CARDS...
BINGO!
SCAN FREQUENCY BANDWIDTH DECRYPT
164.885 MHz
5 FOUND
2.31.4
I DESIGNED AND BUILT THIS SPACE ARMOR BEFORE KEARSON DEWITT'S TECHNO-ORGANIC PARASITE DESTROYED MY NERVOUS SYSTEM--
--BUT I KNEW I'D NEED ITS SPECIALIZED CAPABILITIES FOR THIS MISSION.

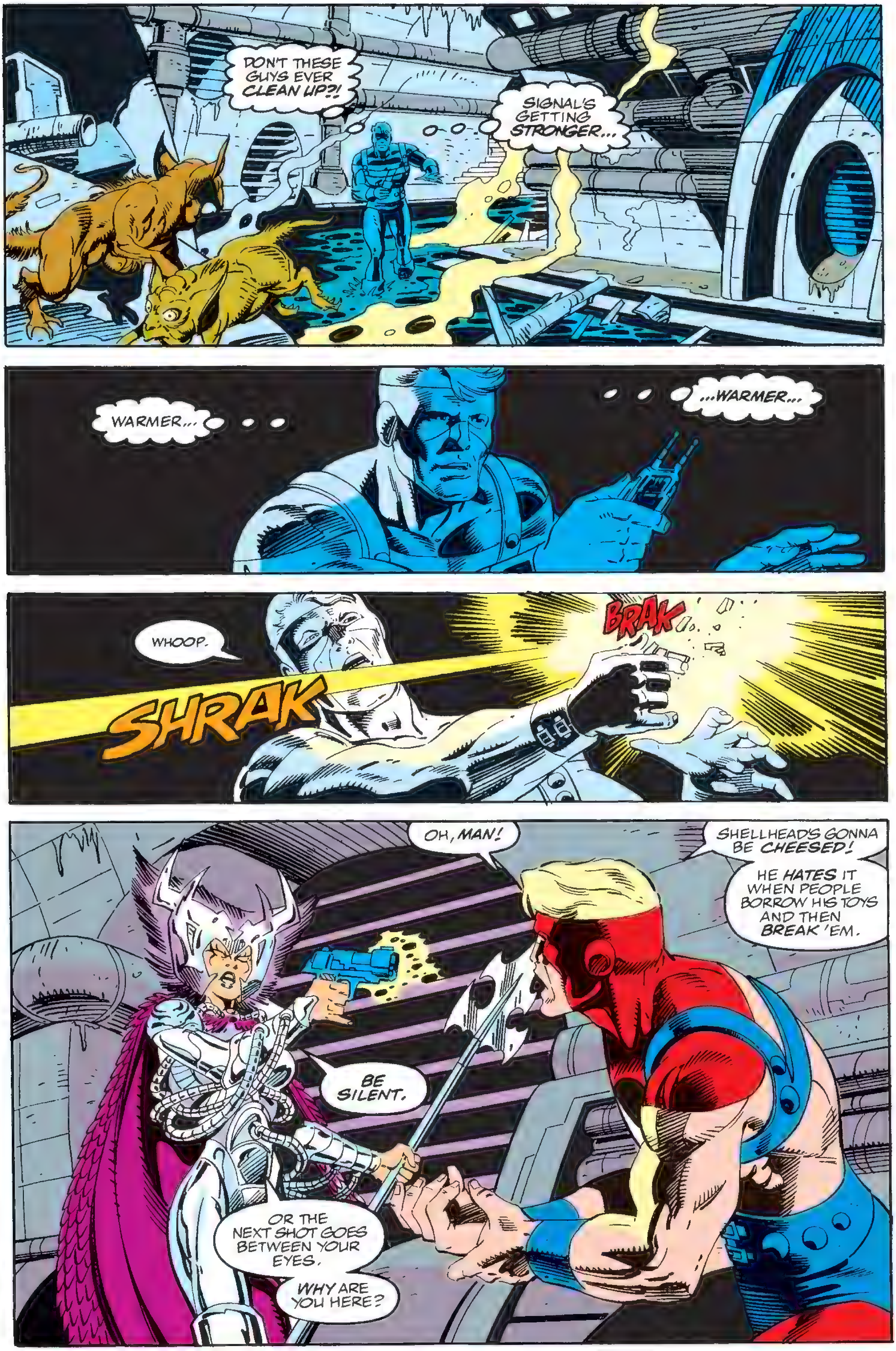

SHORTLY...
SE MODE SELECT O/S COMMUNI
TACTICAL
DIAGNOSTIC
2.31.6
THAT MUST BE IT.
IT'S THE ONLY BUILDING WITH THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF *PRETENSION* AND *UGLINESS* TO BE A GOVERNMENT INSTALLATION IN THE AREA.
LOOKS PRETTY WELL-GUARDED.
EVEN *WITH* THE CLOAKING FIELD, PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE MUCH CHANCE OF SNEAKING IN.
THAT'S OKAY.
ALWAYS *DID* PREFER THE *DIRECT* APPROACH.
AL SENSORS WEAP
ASSAULT MODE SELECTED
2.7.91

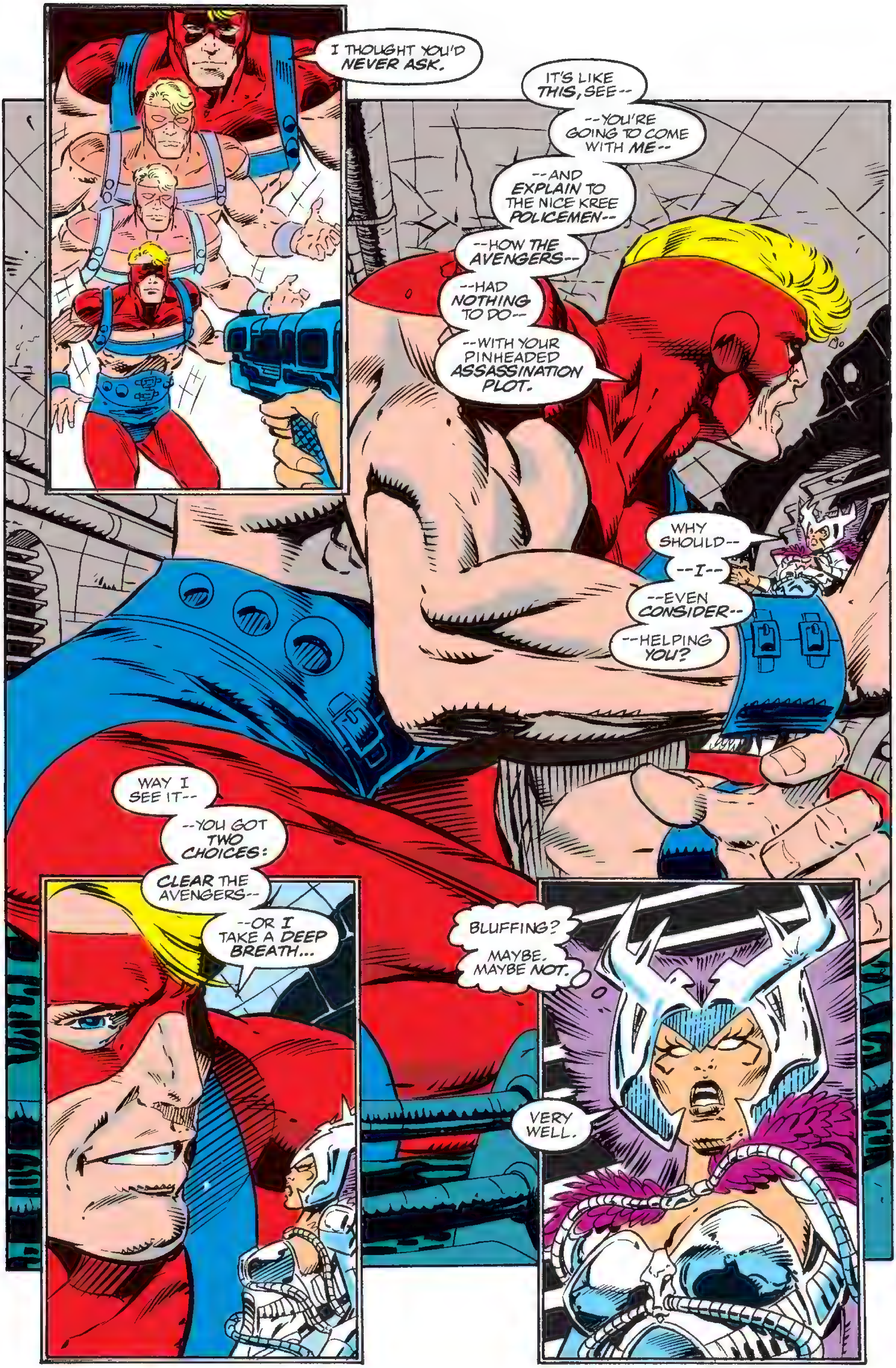

MEANWHILE, WITHIN THE KREE CITADEL OF JUDGMENT, ON LEVEL 291...
THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOUR OFFICIAL ACCUSATION, TERRAN DOG!
THE *INNOCENT* HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM *TRUE JUSTICE*.
HOW CAN HE BE SO CALM?
HE *KNOWS* IT'S JUST A *SHOW TRIAL*.
HE MUST HAVE A *PLAN*.
I *HOPE* HE HAS A PLAN...
COWARDS!
BASE *VILLAINS*!
NO LONGER SHALL THE *PRINCE OF POWER* STAND IDLY BY--
AAGHK!
ZZRRAP
RESISTANCE IS *FUTILE*!
THERE IS *NO ESCAPE* FROM THE *JUDGMENT* OF THE KREE EMPIRE!

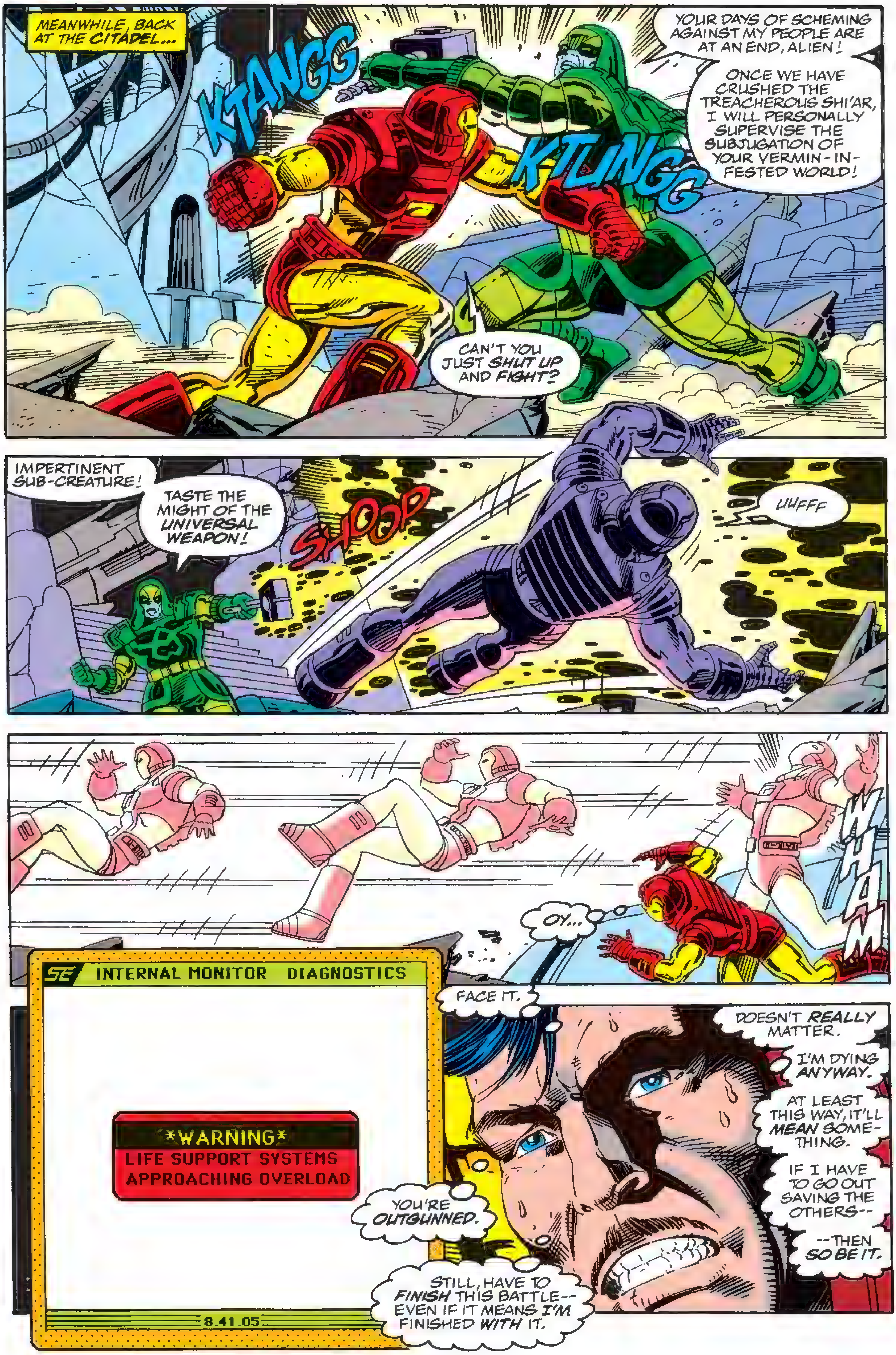

LEVEL 346...
‹WE HAVE PREPARED THE BODIES OF THE **FALLEN EMPERORS** FOR THE PROCESS, SUPREME ONE!›
‹EXCELLENT.›
‹**AEL-DAN** AND **DAR-BEN**--YOU WHO HAVE SERVED THE EMPIRE WHILE I WAS TEMPORARILY INDISPOSED--I GIVE UNTO YOU THE ***SUPREME HONOR*** OF OUR RACE!›
‹ALL THAT YOU ARE SHALL BECOME A SMALL PART OF THAT WHICH I AM.›
‹***REJOICE***, FOR EVEN IN DEATH, YOU SHALL SERVE YOUR PEOPLE.›
‹CONNECT THEM!›
‹NEURAL EXTRACTORS IN PLACE.›
‹CEREBRAL CORE DUMP BEGINS--›
‹--***NOW!***›
‹ONCE THEY OPPOSED ME. NOW THEY ***ARE*** ME!›

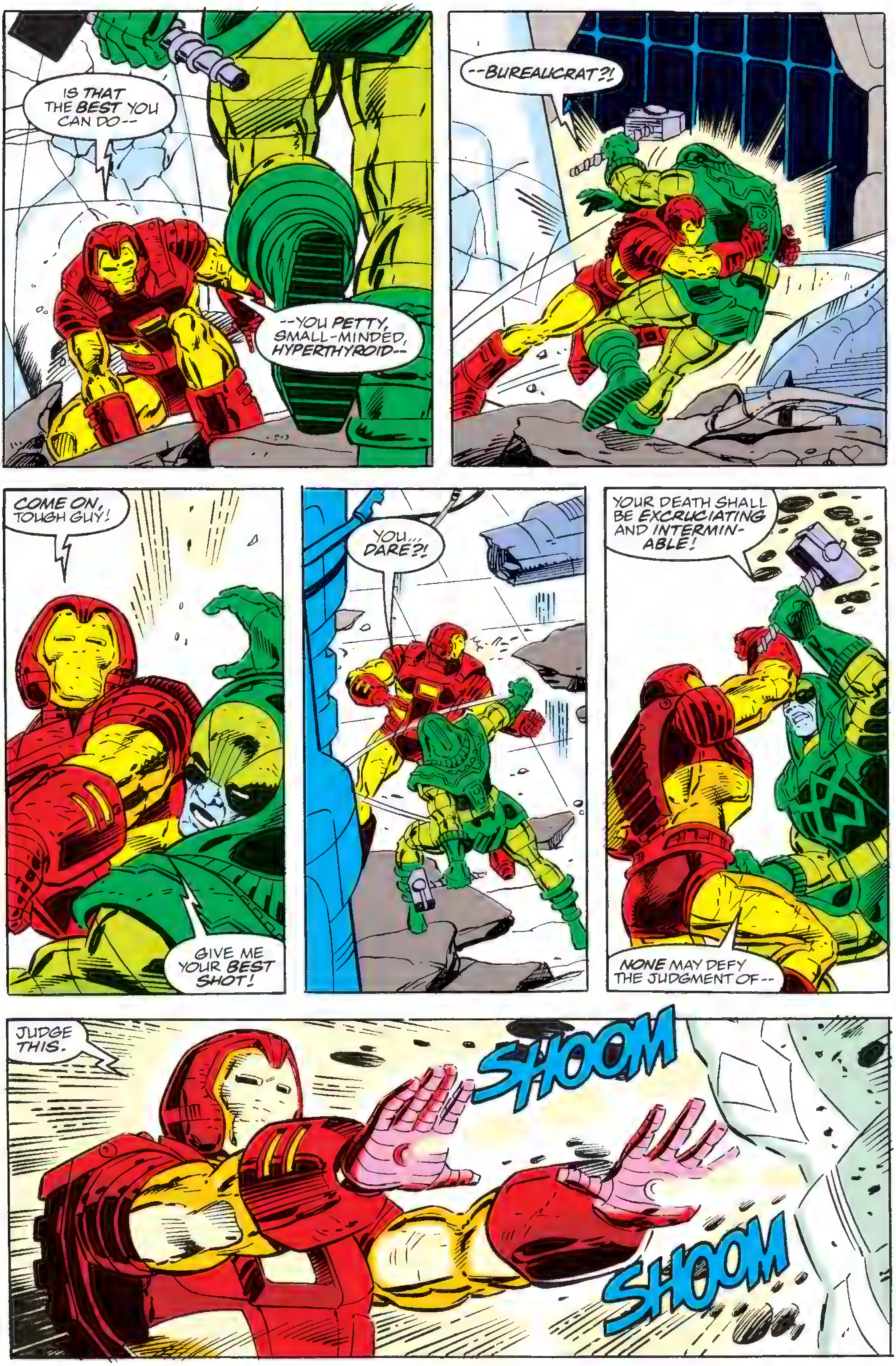

STREET LEVEL.
WHOOM
NOBODY MOVES--
--NOBODY DIES.
WHERE ARE THE AVENGERS?
I GUESS IT WAS TOO MUCH TO HOPE SOMEONE HERE SPOKE *ENGLISH.*
I SPEAK YOUR DEBASED TONGUE, *EARTHSCUM*--
OH-OH...
--SO HEAR ME NOW:
RONAN THE ACCUSER FINDS YOU *GUILTY*--
--THE SENTENCE IS *DEATH!*

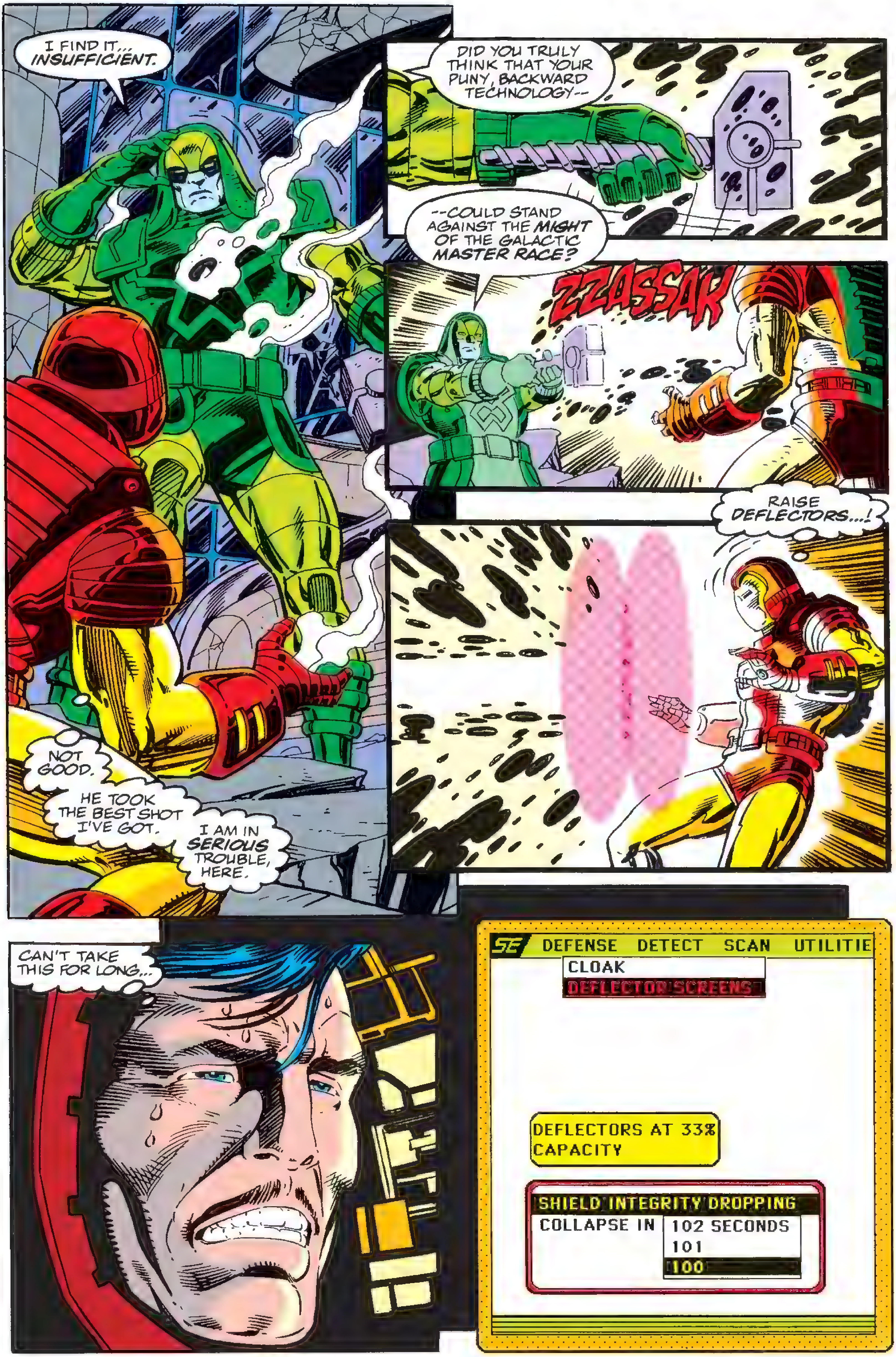

ELSEWHERE...
I DON'T GET IT.
ACCORDING TO THIS GIZMO, I SHOULD BE RIGHT ON TOP OF DEATHBIRD BY NOW.
MAYBE IT'S DEFECTIVE.
NAH.
STARK ENTERPRISES BUILDS THINGS BETTER THAN TIMEX.
MORE LIKELY THAT I'M READIN' IT UPSIDE DOWN OR SOMETHING...
HEY--
--WAITAMINUTE...!
YEAH... D-BIRD'S JUST SNEAKY ENOUGH TO GO TO GROUND DOWN UNDER...
SCHNK
GIK.
SPLOOCH
NOT SURE EVEN SAVIN' THE EARTH IS WORTH THIS...

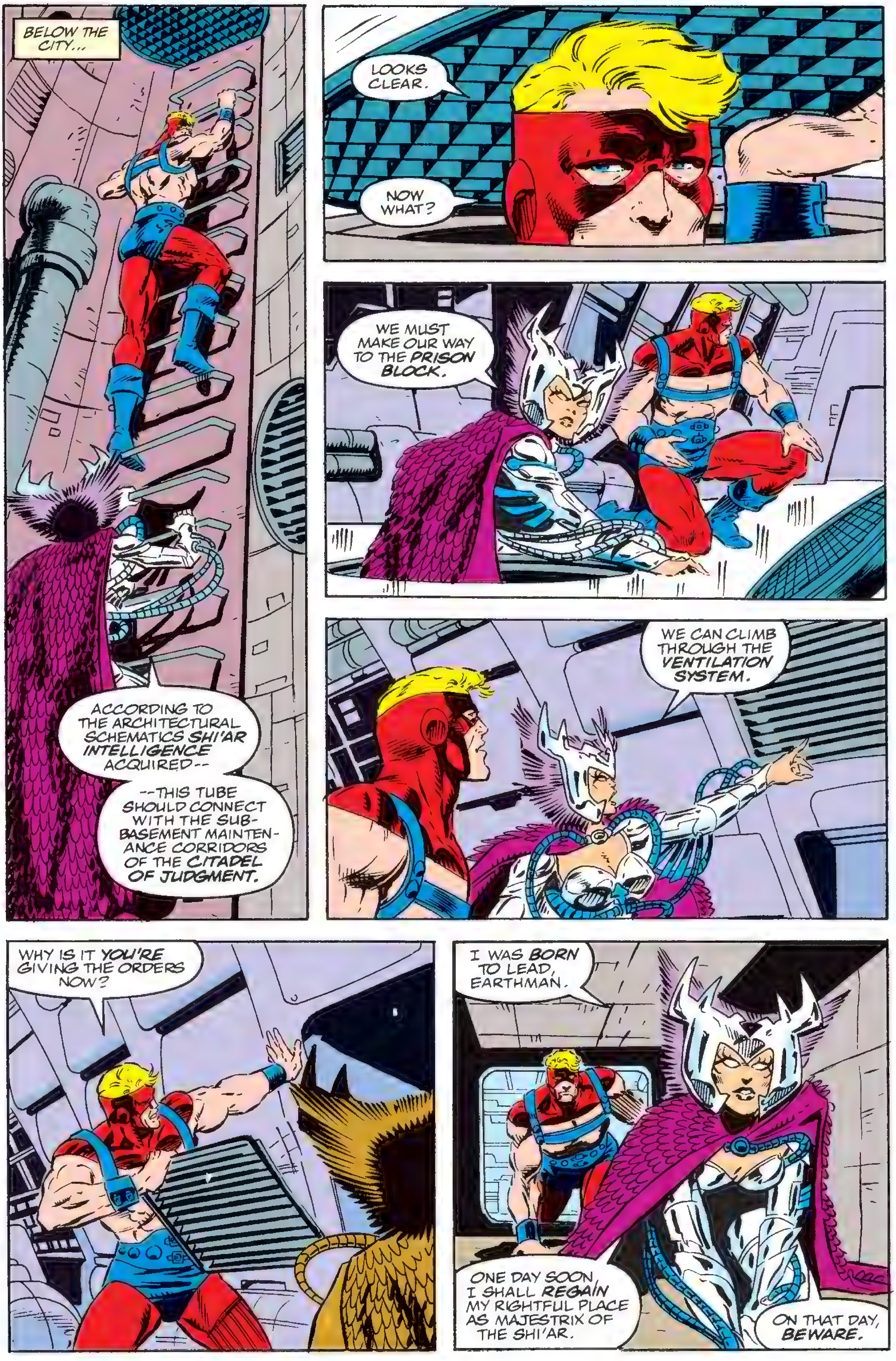

DON'T THESE GUYS EVER CLEAN UP?!
SIGNAL'S GETTING STRONGER...
WARMER...
...WARMER...
WHOOP.
BRAK
SHRAK
OH, MAN!
SHELLHEAD'S GONNA BE CHEESED!
HE HATES IT WHEN PEOPLE BORROW HIS TOYS AND THEN BREAK 'EM.
BE SILENT.
OR THE NEXT SHOT GOES BETWEEN YOUR EYES.
WHY ARE YOU HERE?

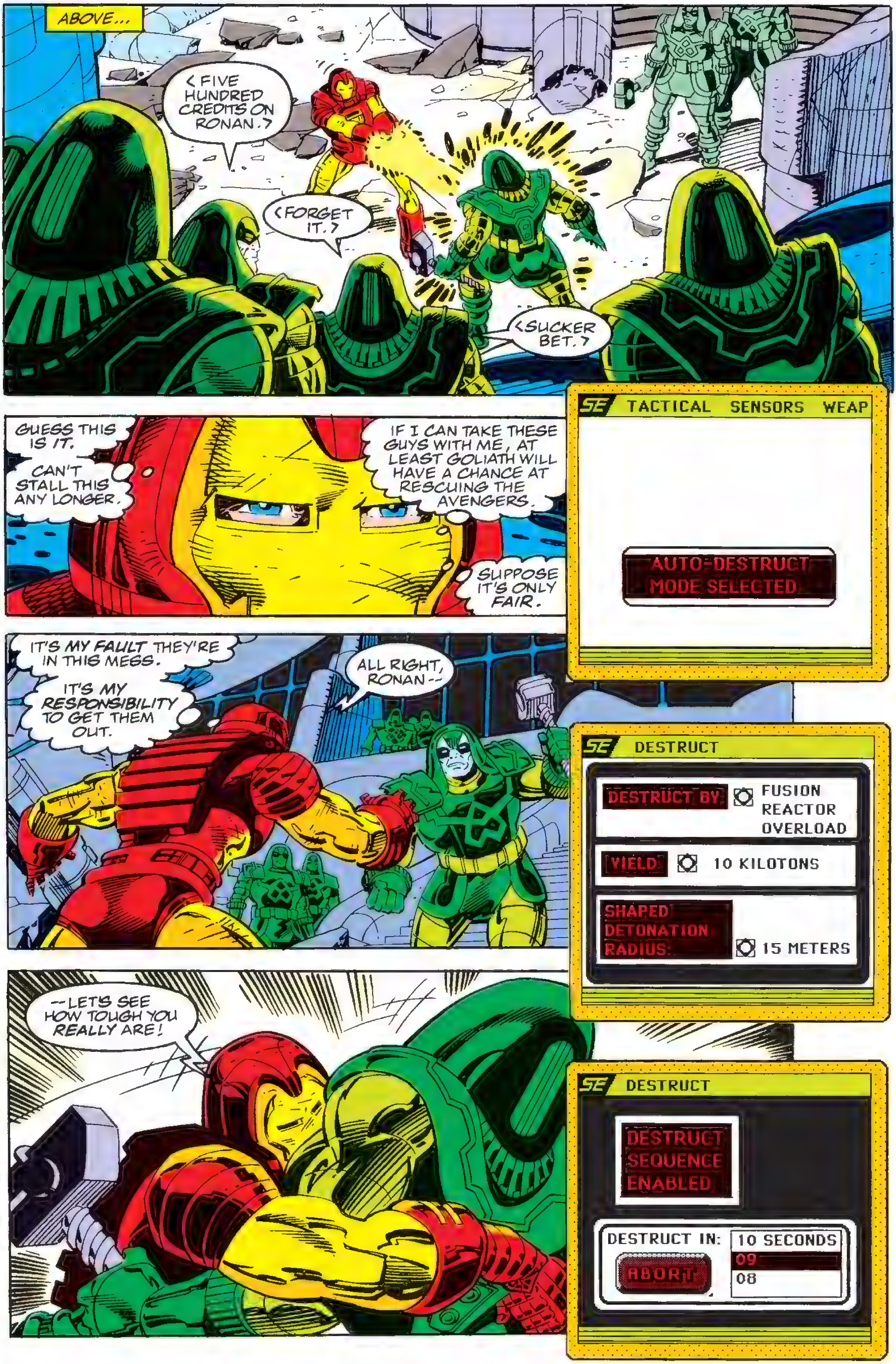

I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK.
IT'S LIKE THIS, SEE--
--YOU'RE GOING TO COME WITH ME--
--AND EXPLAIN TO THE NICE KREE POLICEMEN--
--HOW THE AVENGERS--
--HAD NOTHING TO DO--
--WITH YOUR PINHEADED ASSASSINATION PLOT.
WHY SHOULD--
--I--
--EVEN CONSIDER--
--HELPING YOU?
WAY I SEE IT--
--YOU GOT TWO CHOICES:
CLEAR THE AVENGERS--
--OR I TAKE A DEEP BREATH...
BLUFFING? MAYBE. MAYBE NOT.
VERY WELL.

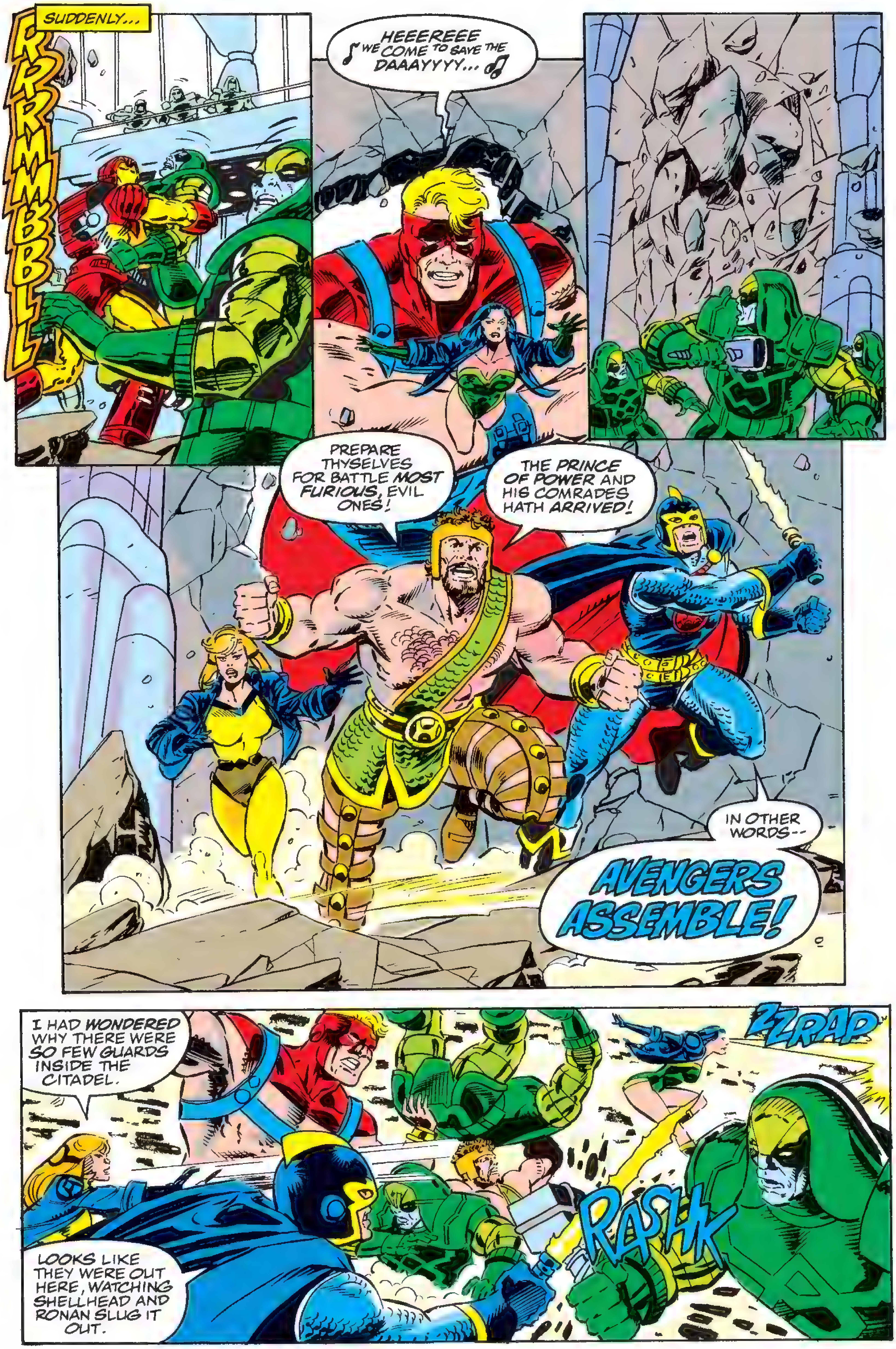

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE *CITADEL...*
KTANGG
YOUR DAYS OF SCHEMING AGAINST MY PEOPLE ARE AT AN END, ALIEN!
ONCE WE HAVE CRUSHED THE TREACHEROUS SHI'AR, I WILL PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THE SUBJUGATION OF YOUR VERMIN-INFESTED WORLD!
KTUNGG
CAN'T YOU JUST *SHUT UP* AND *FIGHT?*
IMPERTINENT SUB-CREATURE!
TASTE THE MIGHT OF THE *UNIVERSAL WEAPON!*
SHOOP
UUFFF
OY...
WHAM
INTERNAL MONITOR DIAGNOSTICS
WARNING
LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS APPROACHING OVERLOAD
8.41.05
FACE IT.
YOU'RE *OUTGUNNED.*
STILL, HAVE TO *FINISH* THIS BATTLE-- EVEN IF IT MEANS *I'M* FINISHED *WITH* IT.
DOESN'T *REALLY* MATTER.
I'M DYING *ANYWAY.*
AT LEAST THIS WAY, IT'LL *MEAN* SOMETHING.
IF I HAVE TO GO OUT SAVING THE OTHERS--
--THEN *SO BE IT.*

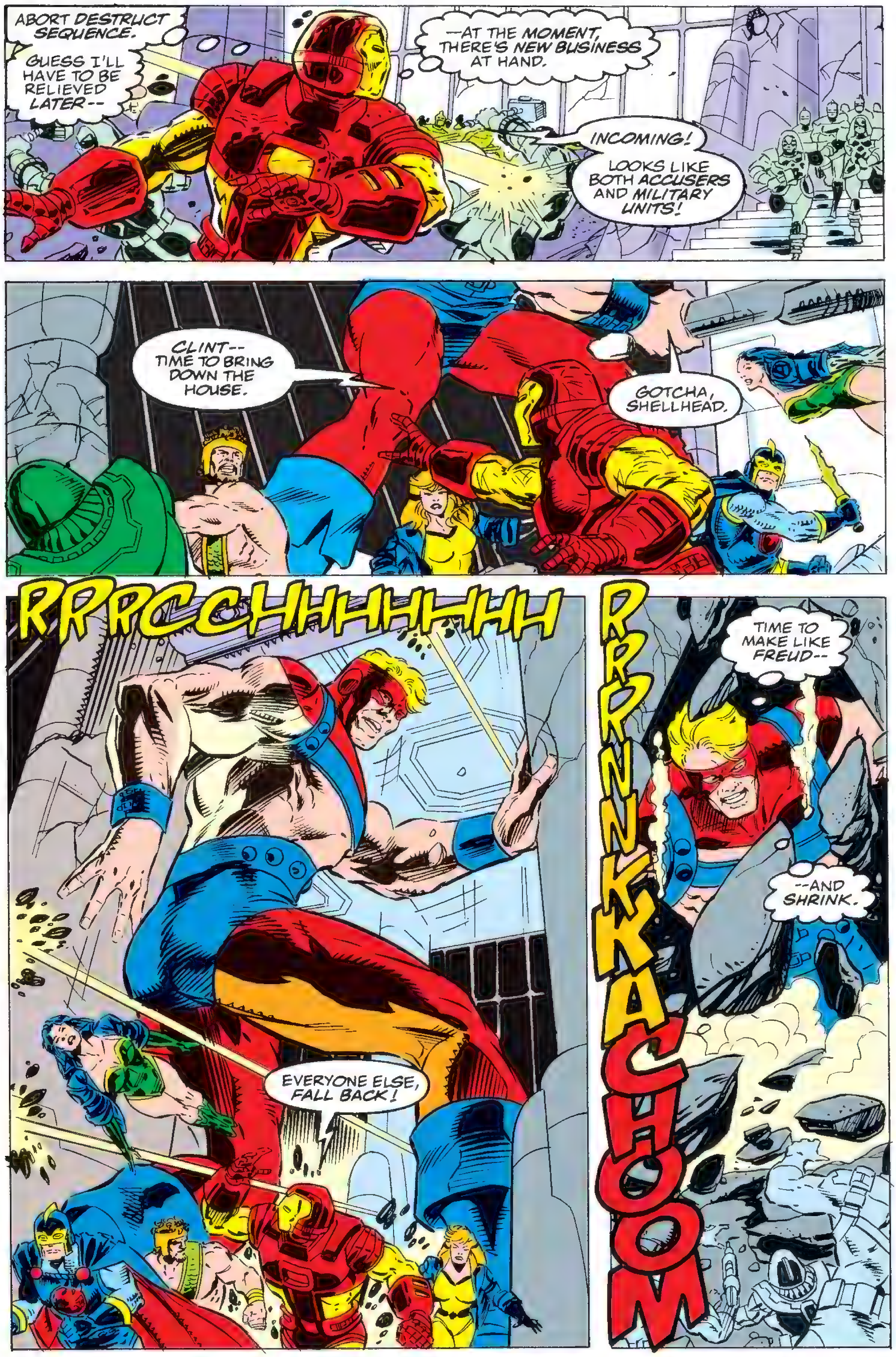

IS THAT THE *BEST* YOU CAN DO--
--YOU PETTY, SMALL-MINDED, HYPERTHYROID--
--BUREAUCRAT?!
COME ON, TOUGH GUY!
GIVE ME YOUR *BEST* SHOT!
YOU... DARE?!
YOUR DEATH SHALL BE *EXCRUCIATING* AND *INTERMINABLE!*
NONE MAY DEFY THE JUDGMENT OF--
JUDGE THIS.
SHOOM
SHOOM

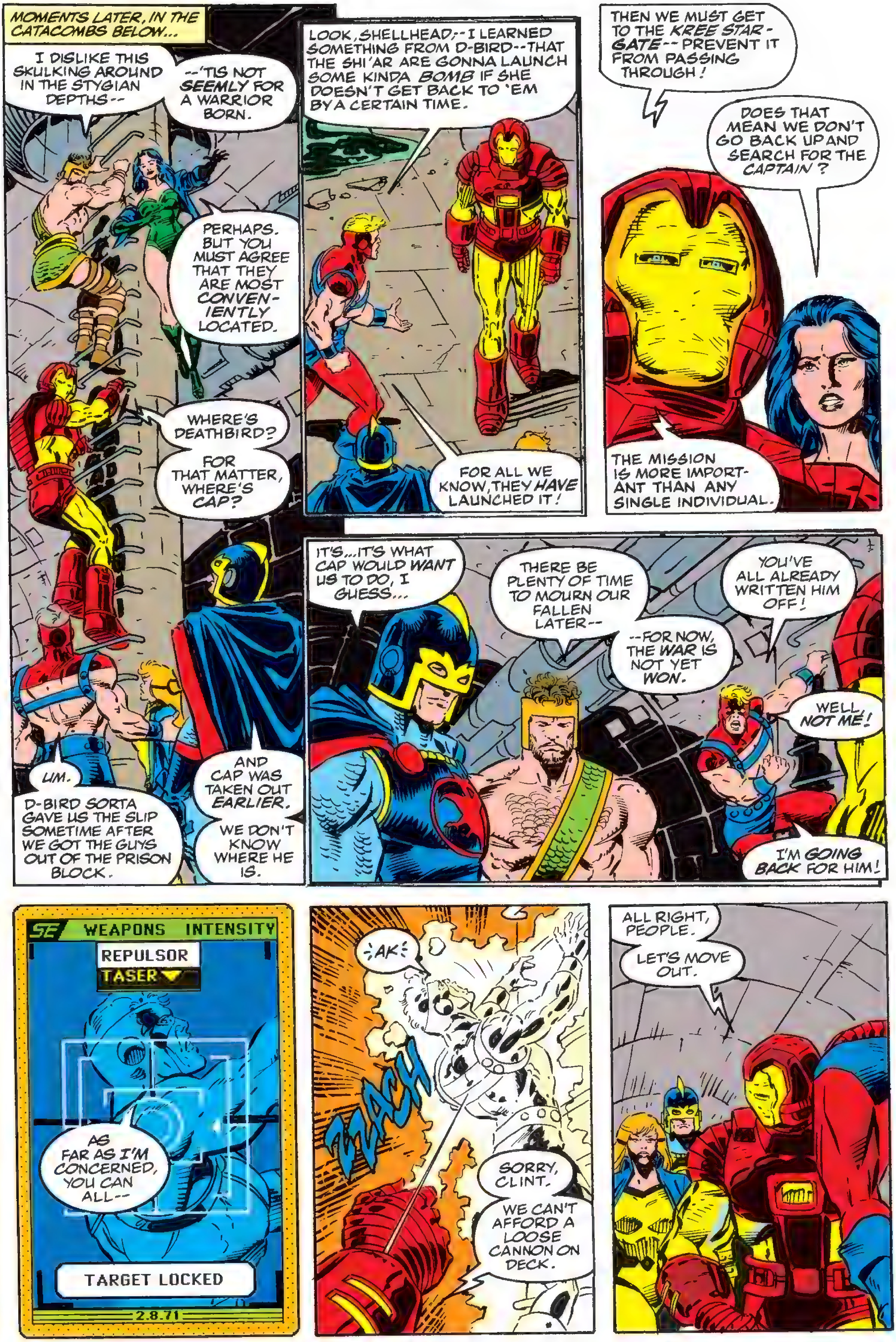

I FIND IT... *INSUFFICIENT.*
DID YOU TRULY THINK THAT YOUR PUNY, BACKWARD TECHNOLOGY--
--COULD STAND AGAINST THE *MIGHT* OF THE GALACTIC *MASTER RACE?*
ZZASSAK
RAISE DEFLECTORS...!
NOT GOOD.
HE TOOK THE BEST SHOT I'VE GOT.
I AM IN *SERIOUS* TROUBLE, HERE.
CAN'T TAKE THIS FOR LONG...
DEFENSE DETECT SCAN UTILITIE
CLOAK
DEFLECTOR SCREENS
DEFLECTORS AT 33% CAPACITY
SHIELD INTEGRITY DROPPING
COLLAPSE IN 102 SECONDS
101
100

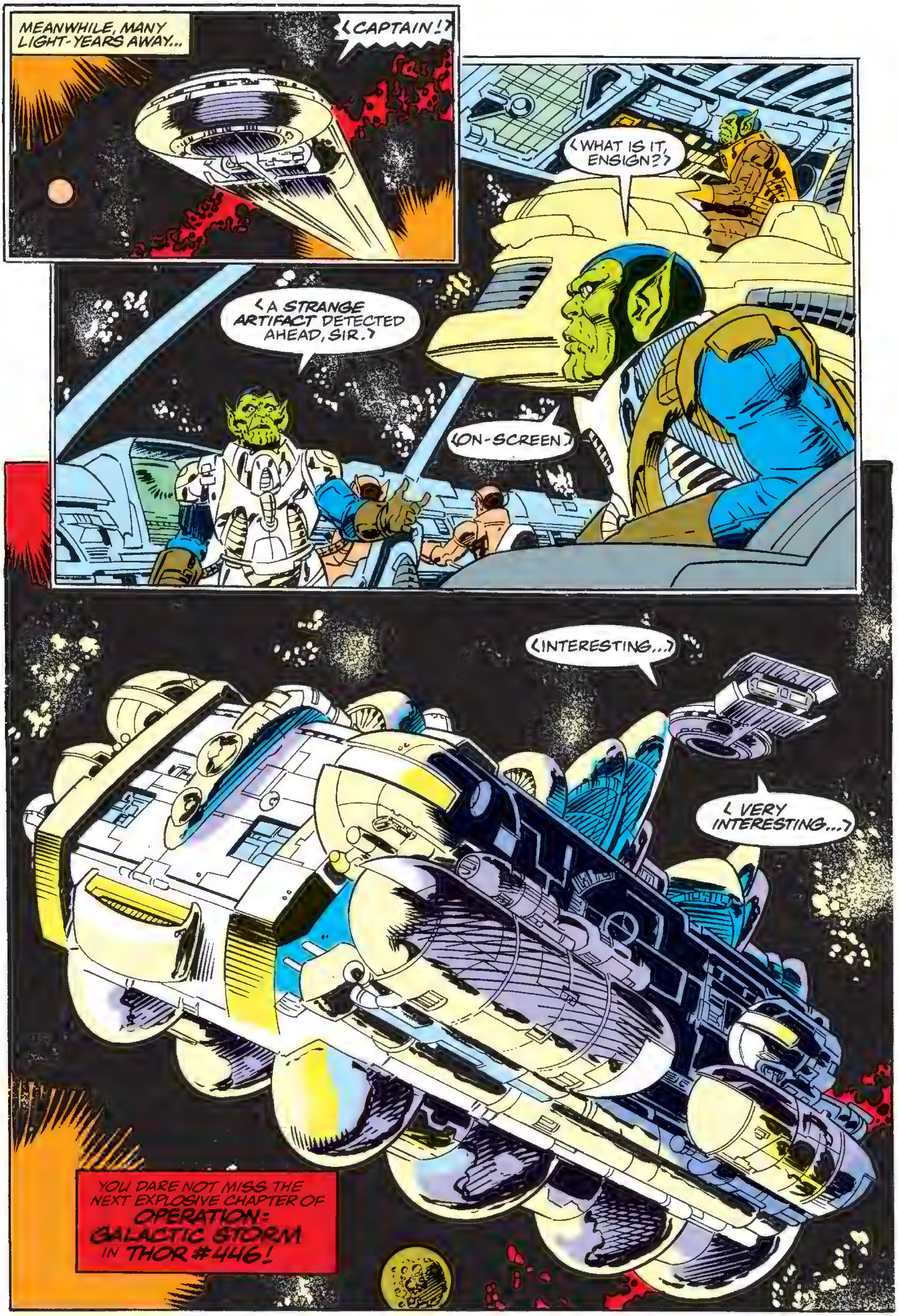

BELOW THE CITY...
ACCORDING TO THE ARCHITECTURAL SCHEMATICS SHI'AR INTELLIGENCE ACQUIRED--
--THIS TUBE SHOULD CONNECT WITH THE SUB-BASEMENT MAINTENANCE CORRIDORS OF THE CITADEL OF JUDGMENT.
LOOKS CLEAR.
NOW WHAT?
WE MUST MAKE OUR WAY TO THE PRISON BLOCK.
WE CAN CLIMB THROUGH THE VENTILATION SYSTEM.
WHY IS IT YOU'RE GIVING THE ORDERS NOW?
I WAS BORN TO LEAD, EARTHMAN.
ONE DAY SOON, I SHALL REGAIN MY RIGHTFUL PLACE AS MAJESTRIX OF THE SHI'AR.
ON THAT DAY, BEWARE.


ABOVE...
<FIVE HUNDRED CREDITS ON RONAN.>
<FORGET IT.>
<SUCKER BET.>
GUESS THIS IS IT.
CAN'T STALL THIS ANY LONGER.
IF I CAN TAKE THESE GUYS WITH ME, AT LEAST GOLIATH WILL HAVE A CHANCE AT RESCUING THE AVENGERS.
SUPPOSE IT'S ONLY FAIR.
SE TACTICAL SENSORS WEAP
AUTO-DESTRUCT MODE SELECTED
IT'S MY FAULT THEY'RE IN THIS MESS.
IT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY TO GET THEM OUT.
ALL RIGHT, RONAN--
SE DESTRUCT
DESTRUCT BY: FUSION REACTOR OVERLOAD
YIELD: 10 KILOTONS
SHAPED DETONATION RADIUS: 15 METERS
--LET'S SEE HOW TOUGH YOU REALLY ARE!
SE DESTRUCT
DESTRUCT SEQUENCE ENABLED
DESTRUCT IN: 10 SECONDS
09
08
ABORT


SUDDENLY...
RRRMMMBBLL
♪ HEEEREEE WE COME TO SAVE THE DAAAYYYY... ♫
PREPARE THYSELVES FOR BATTLE *MOST FURIOUS*, EVIL ONES!
THE *PRINCE OF POWER* AND HIS COMRADES HATH *ARRIVED!*
IN OTHER WORDS--
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
I HAD *WONDERED* WHY THERE WERE *SO FEW* GUARDS INSIDE THE CITADEL.
ZZRAP
LOOKS LIKE THEY WERE OUT HERE, WATCHING SHELLHEAD AND RONAN SLUG IT OUT.
RASHK


ABORT DESTRUCT SEQUENCE.
GUESS I'LL HAVE TO BE RELIEVED LATER--
--AT THE MOMENT, THERE'S NEW BUSINESS AT HAND.
INCOMING!
LOOKS LIKE BOTH ACCUSERS AND MILITARY UNITS!
CLINT-- TIME TO BRING DOWN THE HOUSE.
GOTCHA, SHELLHEAD.
RRRCCHHHHHHH
EVERYONE ELSE, FALL BACK!
RRRNNKKACHOOM
TIME TO MAKE LIKE FREUD--
--AND SHRINK.


MOMENTS LATER, IN THE CATACOMBS BELOW...
I DISLIKE THIS SKULKING AROUND IN THE STYGIAN DEPTHS--
--'TIS NOT *SEEMLY* FOR A WARRIOR BORN.
PERHAPS. BUT YOU MUST AGREE THAT THEY ARE MOST CONVENIENTLY LOCATED.
WHERE'S DEATHBIRD?
FOR THAT MATTER, WHERE'S CAP?
UM.
D-BIRD SORTA GAVE US THE SLIP SOMETIME AFTER WE GOT THE GUYS OUT OF THE PRISON BLOCK.
AND CAP WAS TAKEN OUT *EARLIER.*
WE DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS.
LOOK, SHELLHEAD,--I LEARNED SOMETHING FROM D-BIRD--THAT THE SHI'AR ARE GONNA LAUNCH SOME KINDA *BOMB* IF SHE DOESN'T GET BACK TO 'EM BY A CERTAIN TIME.
FOR ALL WE KNOW, THEY *HAVE* LAUNCHED IT!
THEN WE MUST GET TO THE *KREE STAR-GATE*--PREVENT IT FROM PASSING THROUGH!
DOES THAT MEAN WE DON'T GO BACK UP AND SEARCH FOR THE *CAPTAIN*?
THE MISSION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY SINGLE INDIVIDUAL.
IT'S...IT'S WHAT CAP WOULD *WANT* US TO DO, I GUESS...
THERE BE PLENTY OF TIME TO MOURN OUR FALLEN LATER--
--FOR NOW, THE *WAR* IS NOT YET *WON.*
YOU'VE ALL ALREADY WRITTEN HIM OFF!
WELL, *NOT ME!*
I'M *GOING BACK* FOR HIM!
SE WEAPONS INTENSITY
REPULSOR
TASER
AS FAR AS *I'M* CONCERNED, YOU CAN ALL--
TARGET LOCKED
2.8.71
AK
ZZACK
SORRY, CLINT.
WE CAN'T AFFORD A LOOSE CANNON ON DECK.
ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE.
LET'S MOVE OUT.


MEANWHILE, MANY LIGHT-YEARS AWAY...
‹CAPTAIN!›
‹WHAT IS IT, ENSIGN?›
‹A STRANGE ARTIFACT DETECTED AHEAD, SIR.›
‹ON-SCREEN.›
‹INTERESTING...›
‹VERY INTERESTING...›
YOU DARE NOT MISS THE NEXT EXPLOSIVE CHAPTER OF OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM IN THOR #446!

NEXT ISSUE› THE STORM AFTER THE STORM: FROM THE PAGES OF GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY, THE ALIEN RACE KNOWN AS THE STARK!

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446
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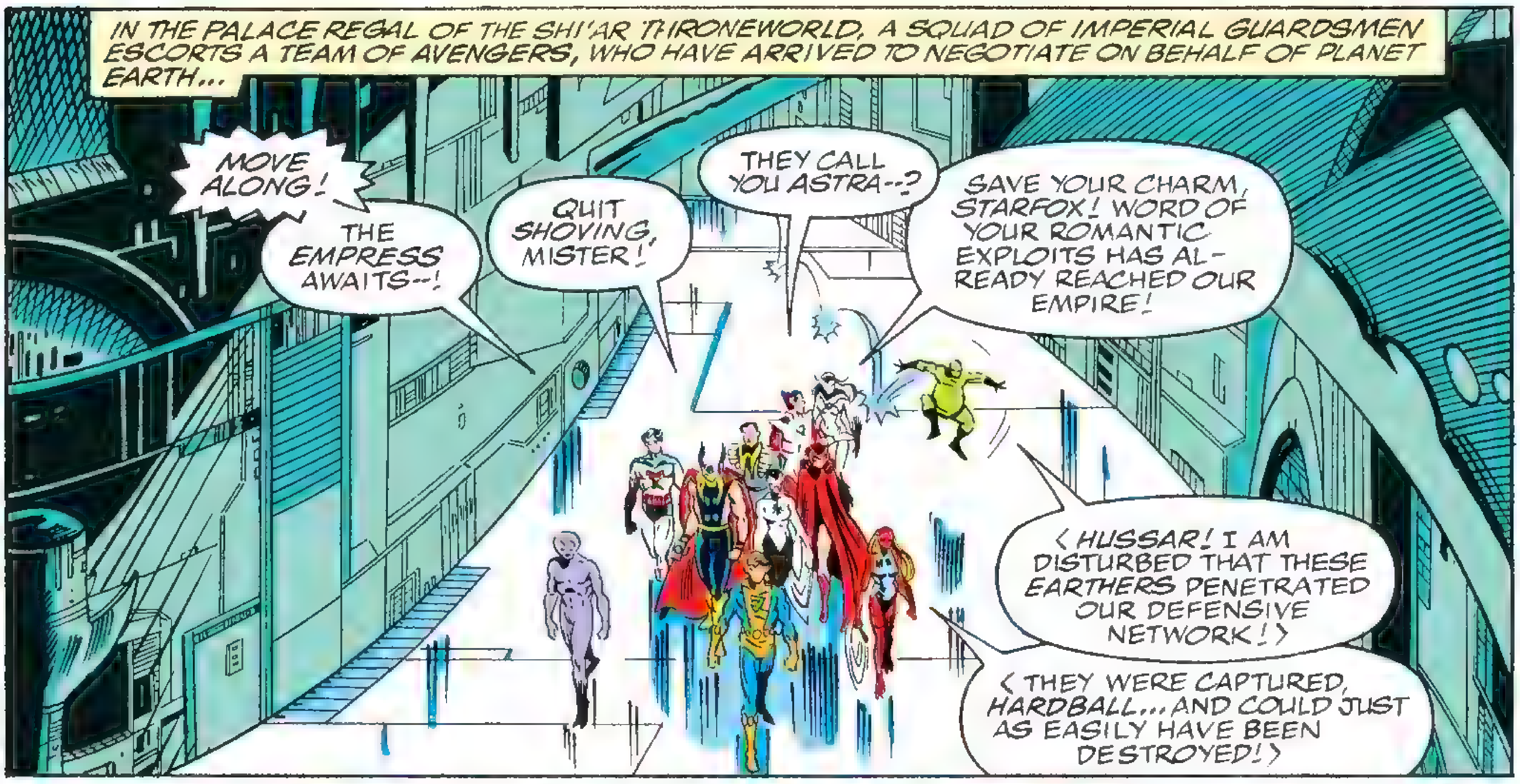
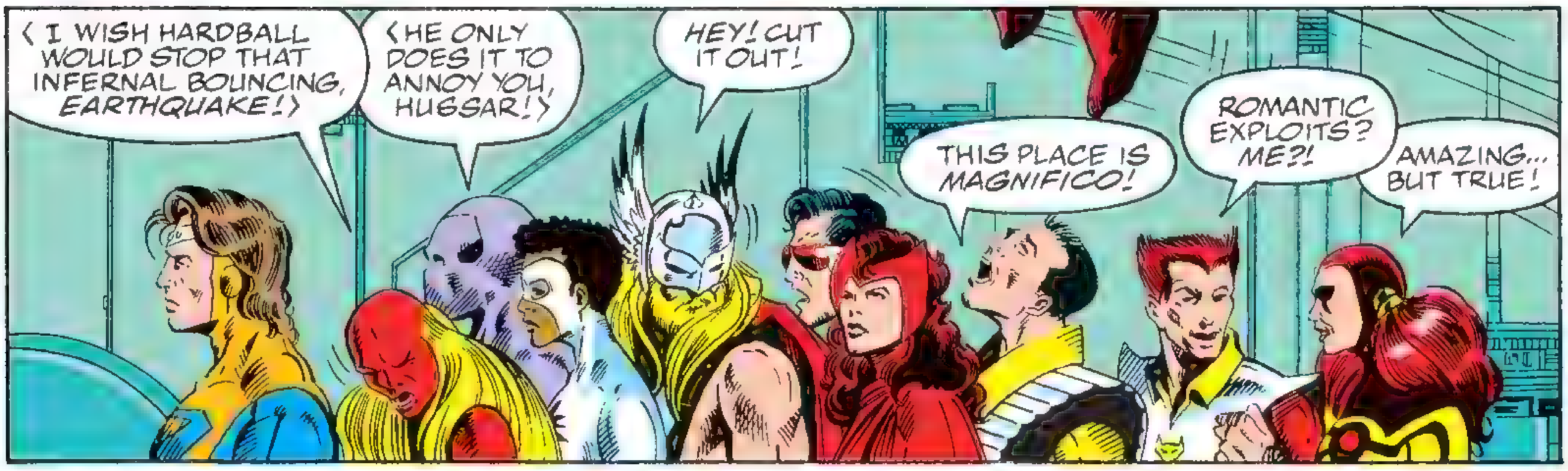
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 14
THE MIGHTY THOR®
THE KREE STARFORCE VS. THE SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARD!
AND THE AVENGERS® ARE STUCK IN THE MIDDLE!!
FRENZ & MILGROM

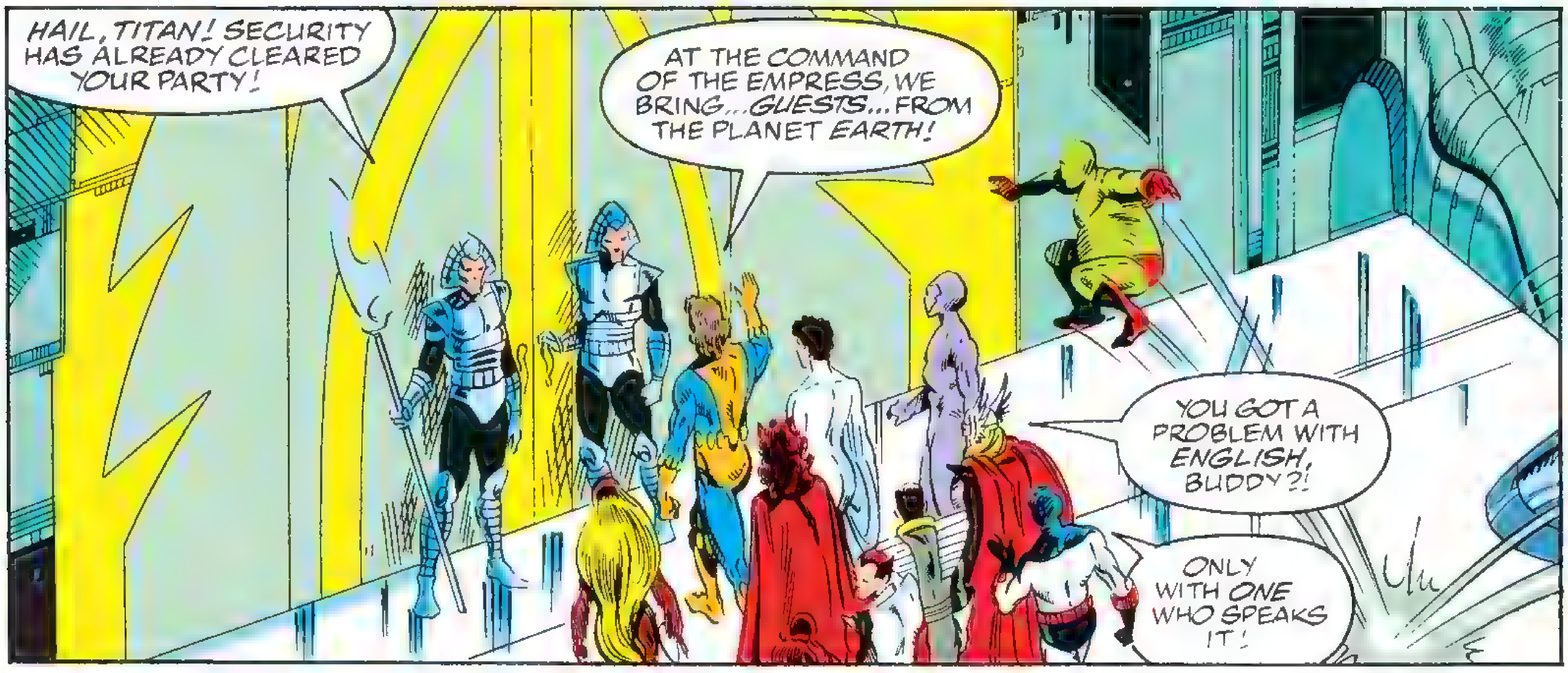
AN ENVOY OF AVENGERS HAS JOURNEYED TO THE ALIEN SHI'AR EMPIRE TO TRY TO STOP THE SHI'AR FROM WAGING WAR WITH THE KREE — ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES CAUGHT BETWEEN SUPERHUMANOID CHAMPIONS OF BOTH RACES — THE SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARD AND THE KREE STARFORCE!

STAN LEE PRESENTS. . . **THE MIGHTY THOR**

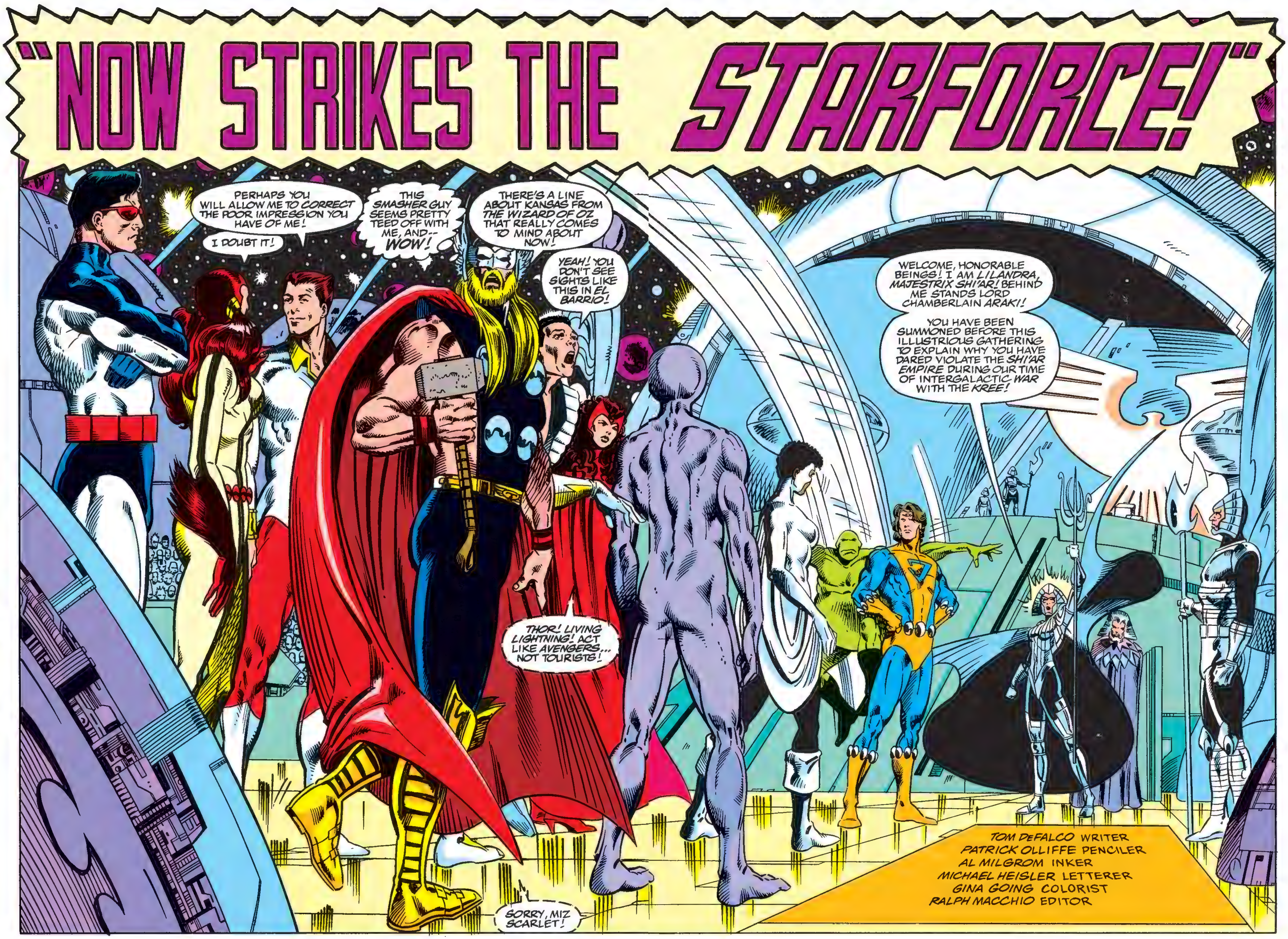
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 14


IN THE PALACE REGAL OF THE SHI'AR THRONEWORLD, A SQUAD OF IMPERIAL GUARDSMEN ESCORTS A TEAM OF AVENGERS, WHO HAVE ARRIVED TO NEGOTIATE ON BEHALF OF PLANET EARTH...
MOVE ALONG!
THE EMPRESS AWAITS--!
QUIT SHOVING, MISTER!
THEY CALL YOU ASTRA--?
SAVE YOUR CHARM, STARFOX! WORD OF YOUR ROMANTIC EXPLOITS HAS ALREADY REACHED OUR EMPIRE!
‹HUSSAR! I AM DISTURBED THAT THESE EARTHERS PENETRATED OUR DEFENSIVE NETWORK!›
‹THEY WERE CAPTURED, HARDBALL... AND COULD JUST AS EASILY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED!›

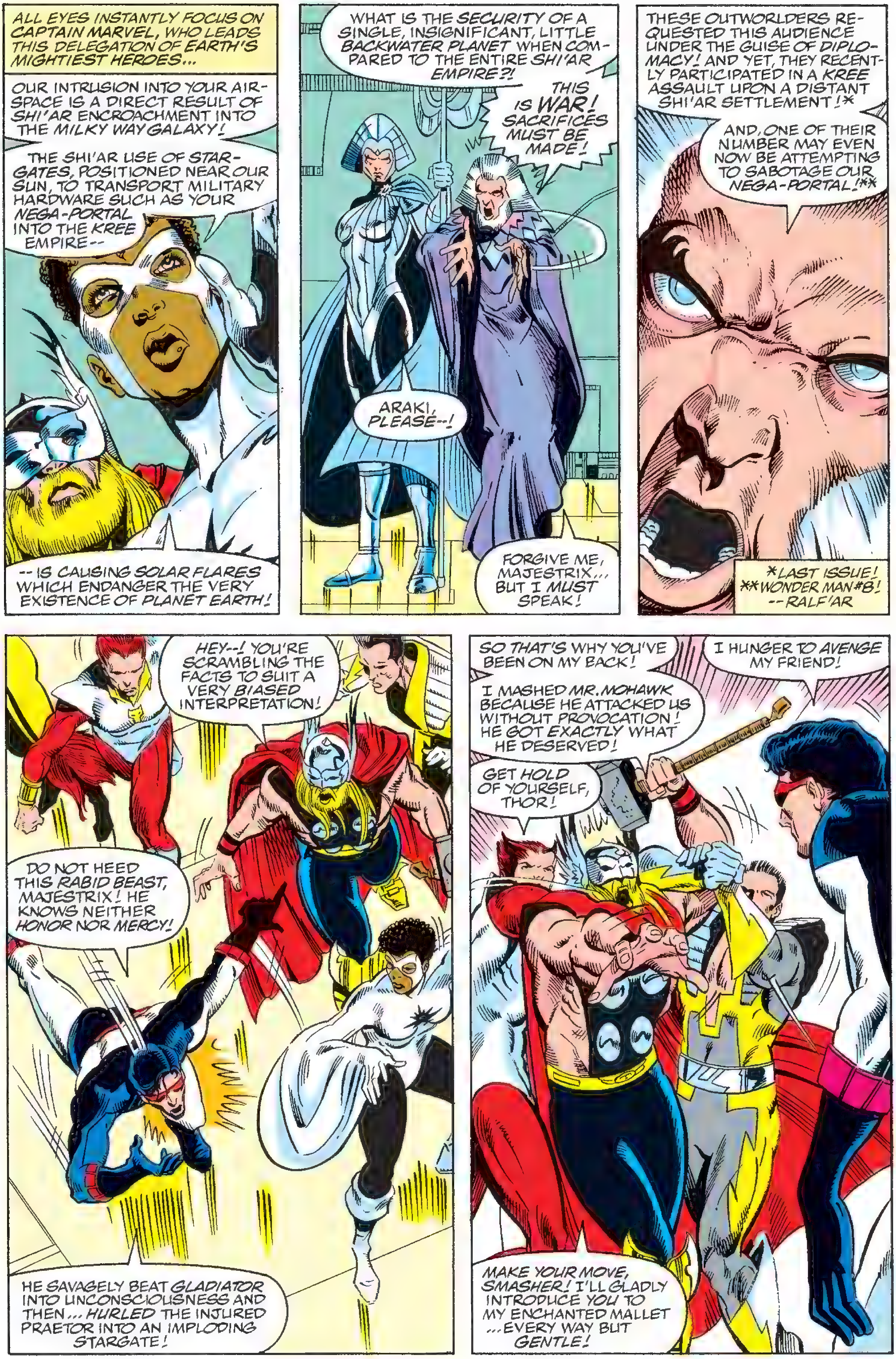

‹I WISH HARDBALL WOULD STOP THAT INFERNAL BOUNCING, EARTHQUAKE!›
‹HE ONLY DOES IT TO ANNOY YOU, HUSSAR!›
HEY! CUT IT OUT!
THIS PLACE IS MAGNIFICO!
ROMANTIC EXPLOITS? ME?!
AMAZING... BUT TRUE!

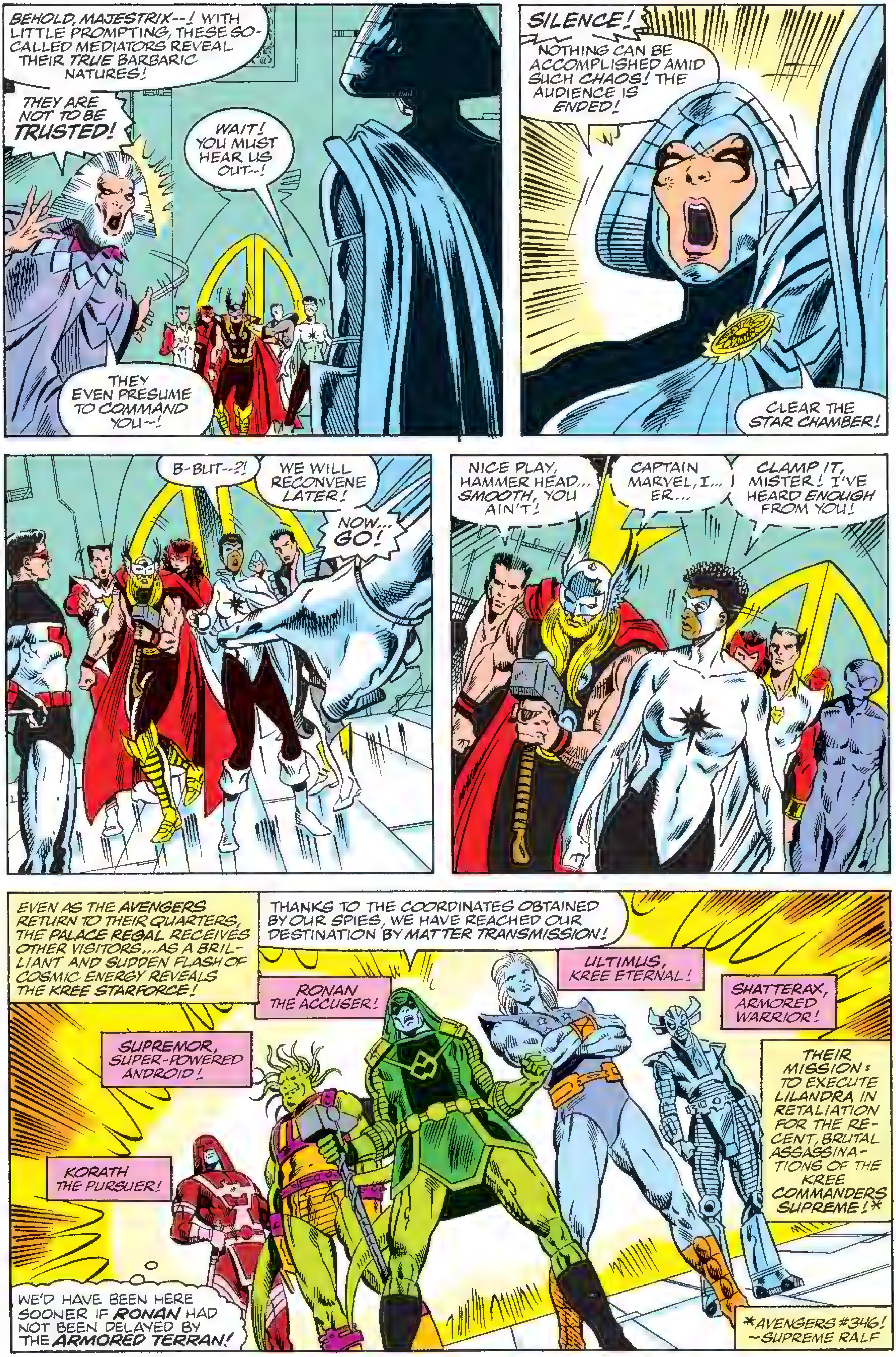

HAIL, TITAN! SECURITY HAS ALREADY CLEARED YOUR PARTY!
AT THE COMMAND OF THE EMPRESS, WE BRING... GUESTS... FROM THE PLANET EARTH!
YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH ENGLISH, BUDDY?!
ONLY WITH ONE WHO SPEAKS IT!

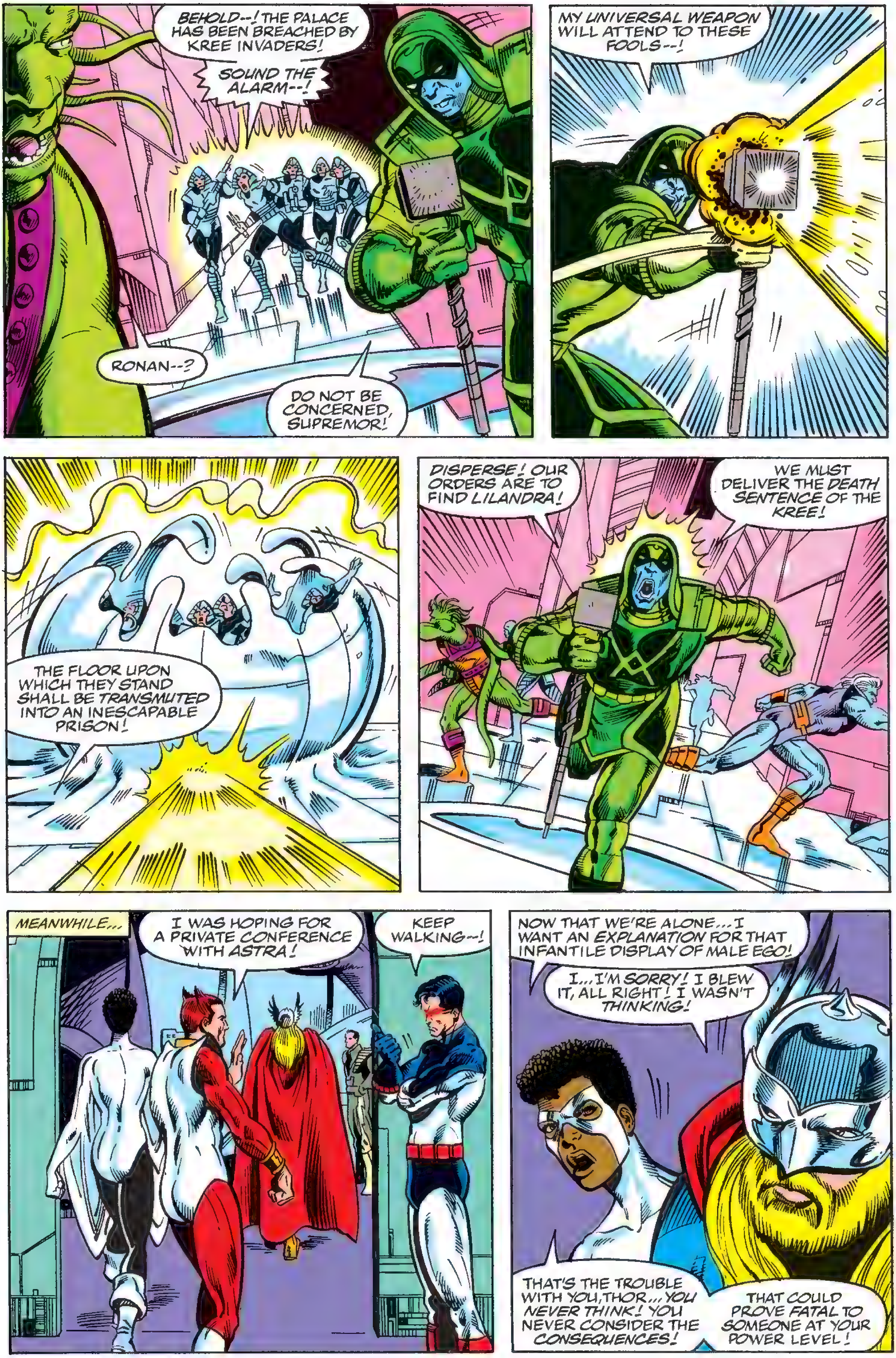
"NOW STRIKES THE STARFORCE!"

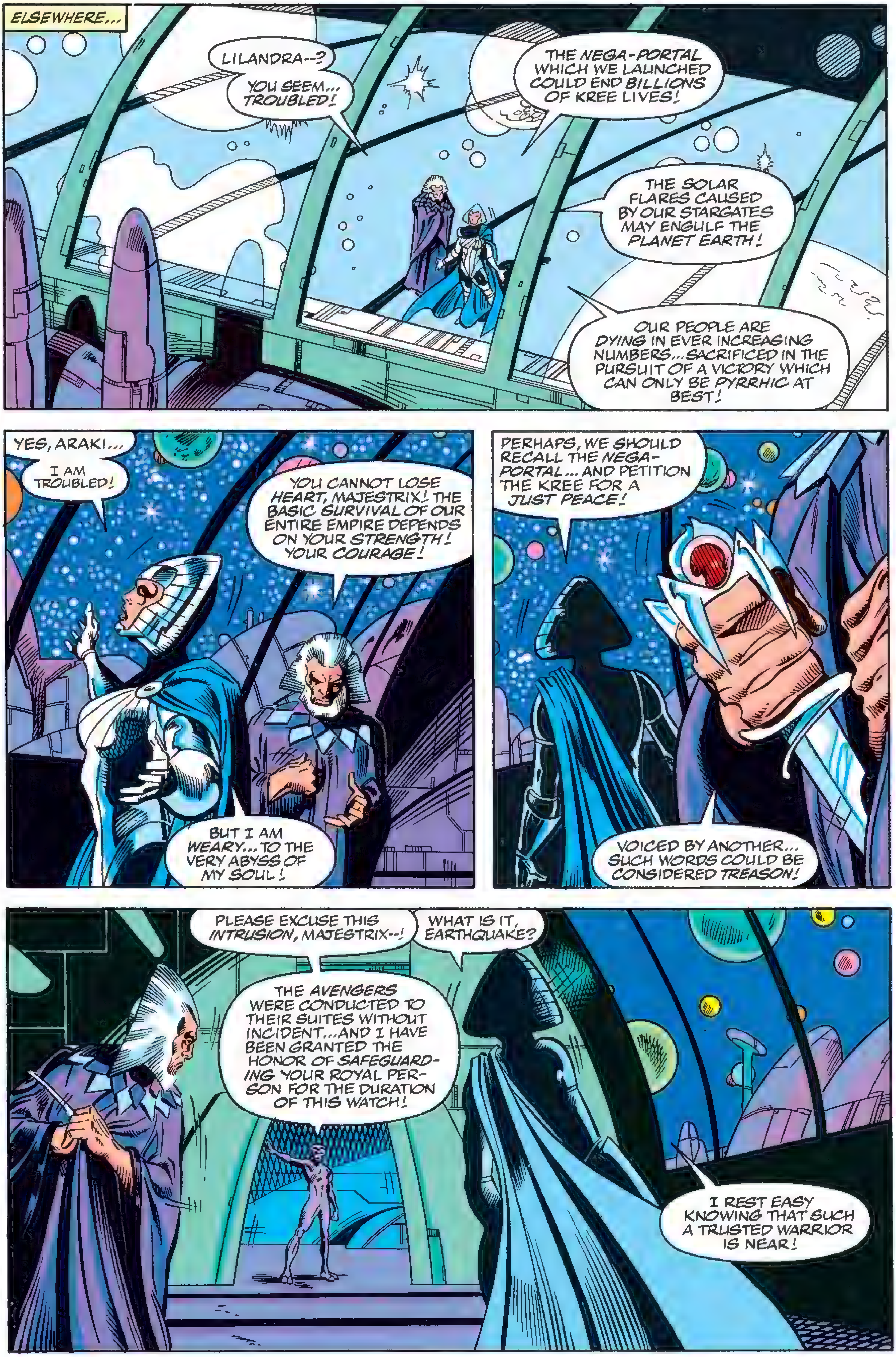

PERHAPS YOU WILL ALLOW ME TO *CORRECT* THE POOR IMPRESSION YOU HAVE OF ME!
I DOUBT IT!
THIS *SMASHER GUY* SEEMS PRETTY TEED OFF WITH ME, AND-- **WOW!**
THERE'S A LINE ABOUT KANSAS FROM *THE WIZARD OF OZ* THAT REALLY COMES TO MIND ABOUT NOW!
YEAH! YOU DON'T SEE SIGHTS LIKE THIS IN *EL BARRIO!*
WELCOME, HONORABLE BEINGS! I AM *LILANDRA, MAJESTRIX SHI'AR!* BEHIND ME STANDS LORD CHAMBERLAIN *ARAKI!*
YOU HAVE BEEN SUMMONED BEFORE THIS ILLUSTRIOUS GATHERING TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU HAVE DARED VIOLATE THE *SHI'AR EMPIRE* DURING OUR TIME OF INTERGALACTIC *WAR* WITH THE *KREE!*
THOR! LIVING LIGHTNING! ACT LIKE *AVENGERS*... NOT TOURISTS!
SORRY, MIZ SCARLET!

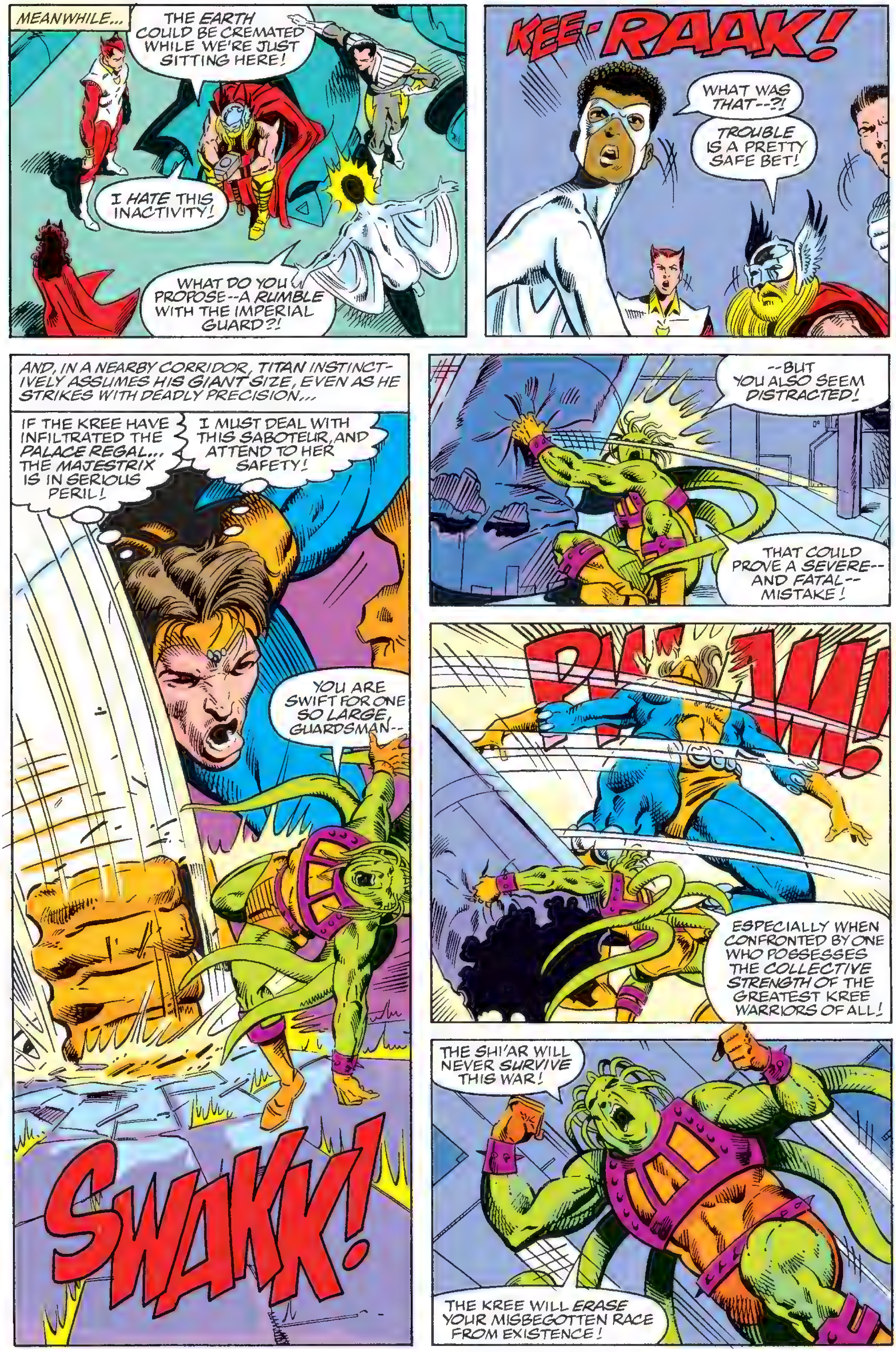
TOM DEFALCO WRITER
PATRICK OLLIFFE PENCILER
AL MILGROM INKER
MICHAEL HEISLER LETTERER
GINA GOING COLORIST
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR

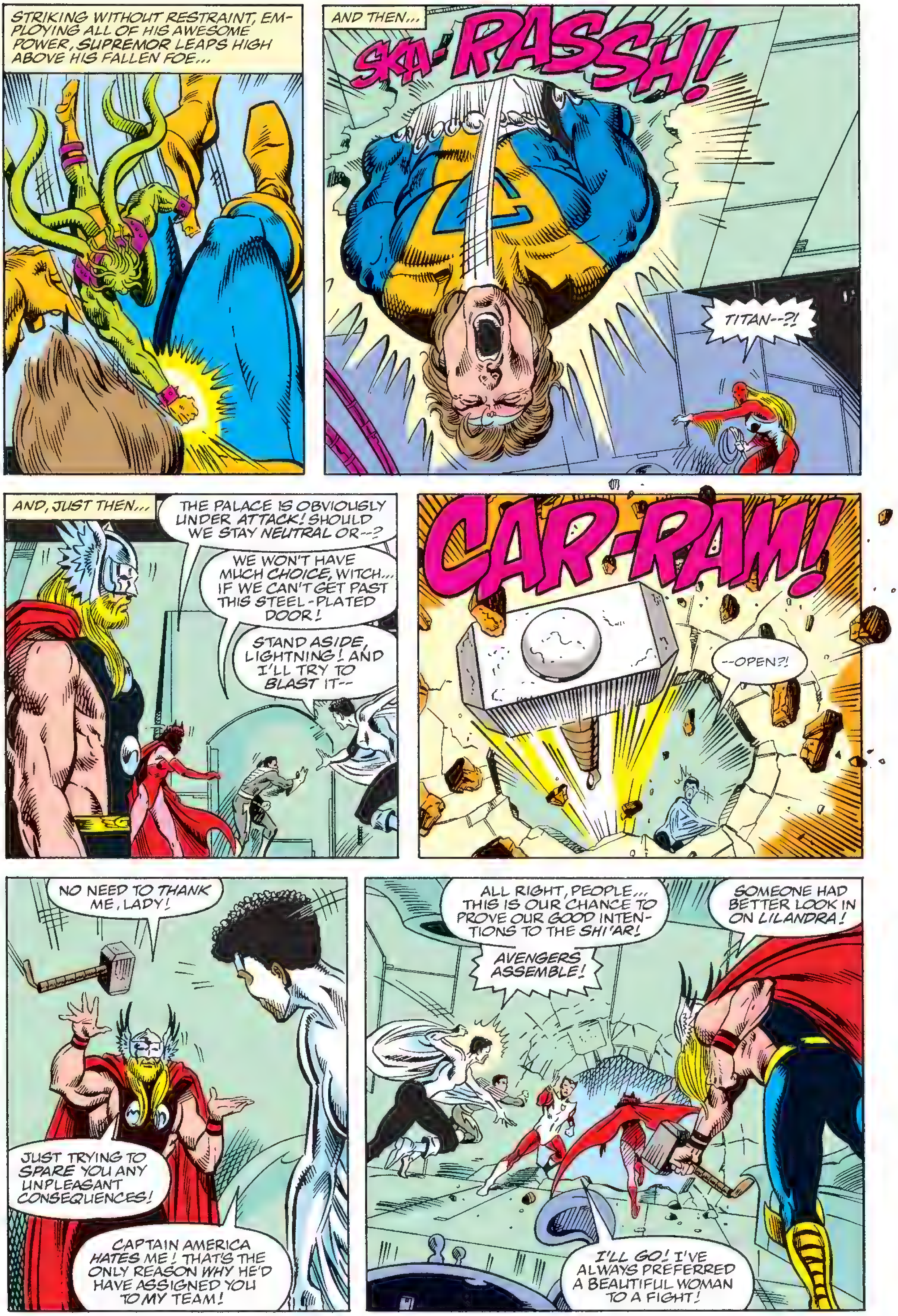

ALL EYES INSTANTLY FOCUS ON CAPTAIN MARVEL, WHO LEADS THIS DELEGATION OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES...
OUR INTRUSION INTO YOUR AIRSPACE IS A DIRECT RESULT OF SHI'AR ENCROACHMENT INTO THE MILKY WAY GALAXY!
THE SHI'AR USE OF STARGATES, POSITIONED NEAR OUR SUN, TO TRANSPORT MILITARY HARDWARE SUCH AS YOUR NEGA-PORTAL INTO THE KREE EMPIRE--
--IS CAUSING SOLAR FLARES WHICH ENDANGER THE VERY EXISTENCE OF PLANET EARTH!
WHAT IS THE SECURITY OF A SINGLE, INSIGNIFICANT, LITTLE BACKWATER PLANET WHEN COMPARED TO THE ENTIRE SHI'AR EMPIRE?!
THIS IS WAR! SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE!
ARAKI, PLEASE--!
FORGIVE ME, MAJESTRIX... BUT I MUST SPEAK!
THESE OUTWORLDERS REQUESTED THIS AUDIENCE UNDER THE GUISE OF DIPLOMACY! AND YET, THEY RECENTLY PARTICIPATED IN A KREE ASSAULT UPON A DISTANT SHI'AR SETTLEMENT!*
AND, ONE OF THEIR NUMBER MAY EVEN NOW BE ATTEMPTING TO SABOTAGE OUR NEGA-PORTAL!**
*LAST ISSUE! **WONDER MAN #8! --RALF'AR
HEY--! YOU'RE SCRAMBLING THE FACTS TO SUIT A VERY BIASED INTERPRETATION!
DO NOT HEED THIS RABID BEAST, MAJESTRIX! HE KNOWS NEITHER HONOR NOR MERCY!
HE SAVAGELY BEAT GLADIATOR INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND THEN... HURLED THE INJURED PRAETOR INTO AN IMPLODING STARGATE!
SO THAT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN ON MY BACK!
I MASHED MR. MOHAWK BECAUSE HE ATTACKED US WITHOUT PROVOCATION! HE GOT EXACTLY WHAT HE DESERVED!
I HUNGER TO AVENGE MY FRIEND!
GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, THOR!
MAKE YOUR MOVE, SMASHER! I'LL GLADLY INTRODUCE YOU TO MY ENCHANTED MALLET ...EVERY WAY BUT GENTLE!

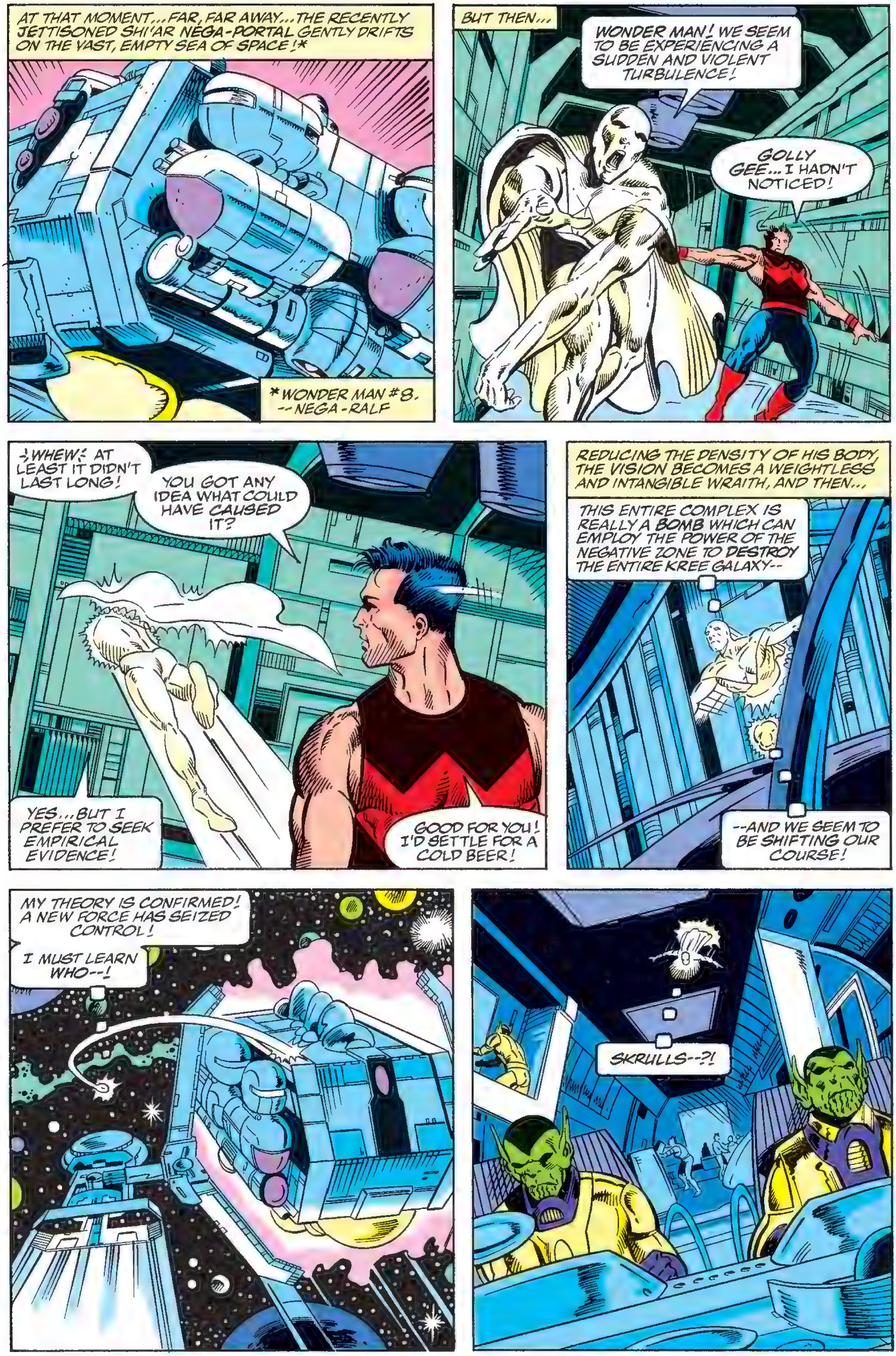

BEHOLD, MAJESTRIX--! WITH LITTLE PROMPTING, THESE SO-CALLED MEDIATORS REVEAL THEIR TRUE BARBARIC NATURES!
THEY ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED!
WAIT! YOU MUST HEAR US OUT--!
THEY EVEN PRESUME TO COMMAND YOU--!
SILENCE! NOTHING CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED AMID SUCH CHAOS! THE AUDIENCE IS ENDED!
CLEAR THE STAR CHAMBER!
B-BUT--?!
WE WILL RECONVENE LATER!
NOW... GO!
NICE PLAY, HAMMER HEAD... SMOOTH, YOU AIN'T!
CAPTAIN MARVEL, I... ER...
CLAMP IT, MISTER! I'VE HEARD ENOUGH FROM YOU!
EVEN AS THE AVENGERS RETURN TO THEIR QUARTERS, THE PALACE REGAL RECEIVES OTHER VISITORS... AS A BRILLIANT AND SUDDEN FLASH OF COSMIC ENERGY REVEALS THE KREE STARFORCE!
THANKS TO THE COORDINATES OBTAINED BY OUR SPIES, WE HAVE REACHED OUR DESTINATION BY MATTER TRANSMISSION!
RONAN THE ACCUSER!
ULTIMUS, KREE ETERNAL!
SHATTERAX, ARMORED WARRIOR!
SUPREMOR, SUPER-POWERED ANDROID!
KORATH THE PURSUER!
THEIR MISSION: TO EXECUTE LILANDRA IN RETALIATION FOR THE RECENT, BRUTAL ASSASSINATIONS OF THE KREE COMMANDERS SUPREME!*
WE'D HAVE BEEN HERE SOONER IF RONAN HAD NOT BEEN DELAYED BY THE ARMORED TERRAN!
*AVENGERS #346! --SUPREME RALF


BEHOLD--! THE PALACE HAS BEEN BREACHED BY KREE INVADERS!
SOUND THE ALARM--!
RONAN--?
DO NOT BE CONCERNED, SUPREMOR!
MY UNIVERSAL WEAPON WILL ATTEND TO THESE FOOLS--!
THE FLOOR UPON WHICH THEY STAND SHALL BE TRANSMUTED INTO AN INESCAPABLE PRISON!
DISPERSE! OUR ORDERS ARE TO FIND LILANDRA!
WE MUST DELIVER THE DEATH SENTENCE OF THE KREE!
MEANWHILE...
I WAS HOPING FOR A PRIVATE CONFERENCE WITH ASTRA!
KEEP WALKING--!
NOW THAT WE'RE ALONE... I WANT AN EXPLANATION FOR THAT INFANTILE DISPLAY OF MALE EGO!
I... I'M SORRY! I BLEW IT, ALL RIGHT! I WASN'T THINKING!
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH YOU, THOR... YOU NEVER THINK! YOU NEVER CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES!
THAT COULD PROVE FATAL TO SOMEONE AT YOUR POWER LEVEL!

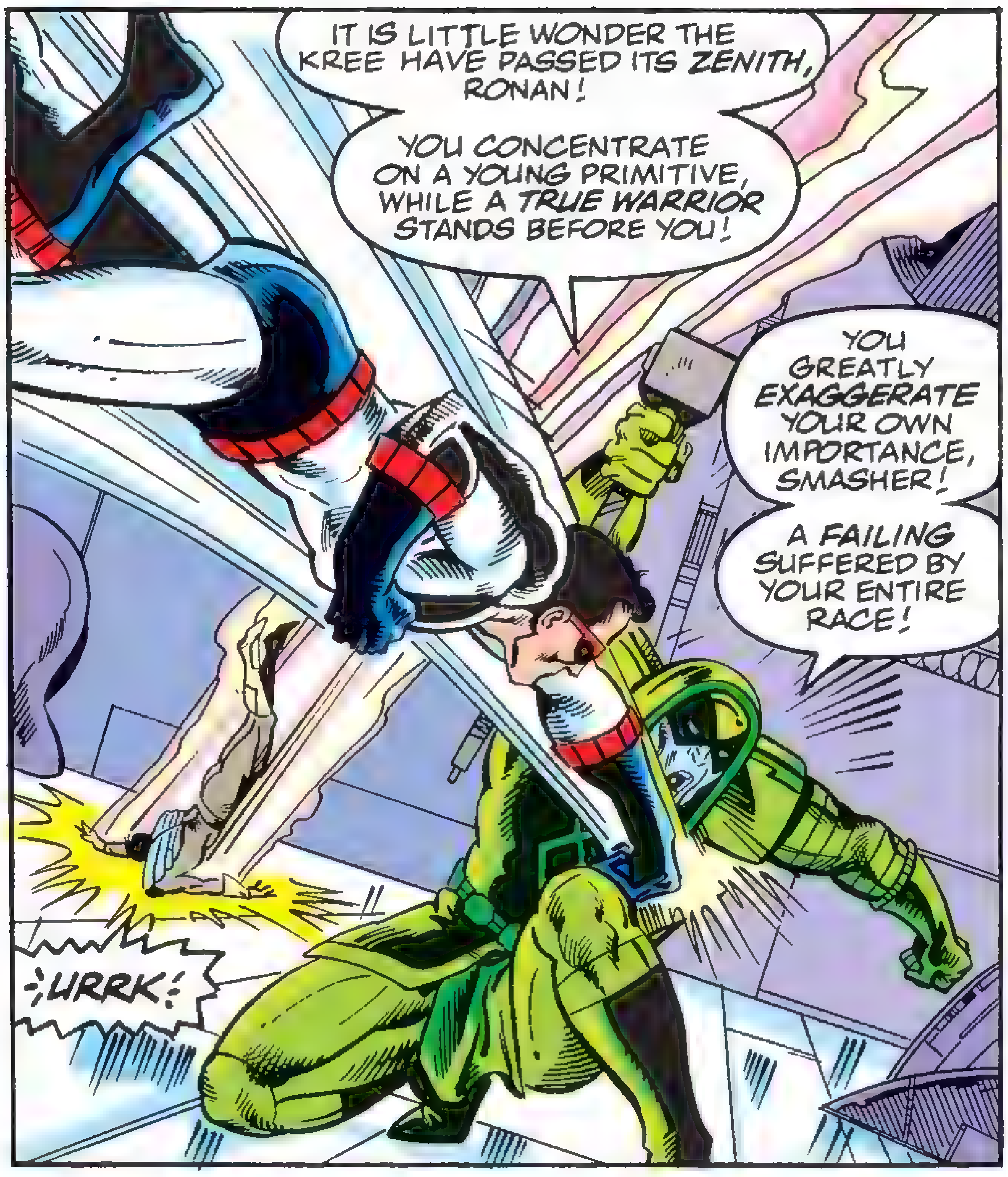

ELSEWHERE...
LILANDRA--? YOU SEEM... TROUBLED!
THE NEGA-PORTAL WHICH WE LAUNCHED COULD END BILLIONS OF KREE LIVES!
THE SOLAR FLARES CAUSED BY OUR STARGATES MAY ENGULF THE PLANET EARTH!
OUR PEOPLE ARE DYING IN EVER INCREASING NUMBERS... SACRIFICED IN THE PURSUIT OF A VICTORY WHICH CAN ONLY BE PYRRHIC AT BEST!
YES, ARAKI... I AM TROUBLED!
YOU CANNOT LOSE HEART, MAJESTRIX! THE BASIC SURVIVAL OF OUR ENTIRE EMPIRE DEPENDS ON YOUR STRENGTH! YOUR COURAGE!
BUT I AM WEARY... TO THE VERY ABYSS OF MY SOUL!
PERHAPS, WE SHOULD RECALL THE NEGA-PORTAL... AND PETITION THE KREE FOR A JUST PEACE!
VOICED BY ANOTHER... SUCH WORDS COULD BE CONSIDERED TREASON!
PLEASE EXCUSE THIS INTRUSION, MAJESTRIX--!
WHAT IS IT, EARTHQUAKE?
THE AVENGERS WERE CONDUCTED TO THEIR SUITES WITHOUT INCIDENT... AND I HAVE BEEN GRANTED THE HONOR OF SAFEGUARDING YOUR ROYAL PERSON FOR THE DURATION OF THIS WATCH!
I REST EASY KNOWING THAT SUCH A TRUSTED WARRIOR IS NEAR!

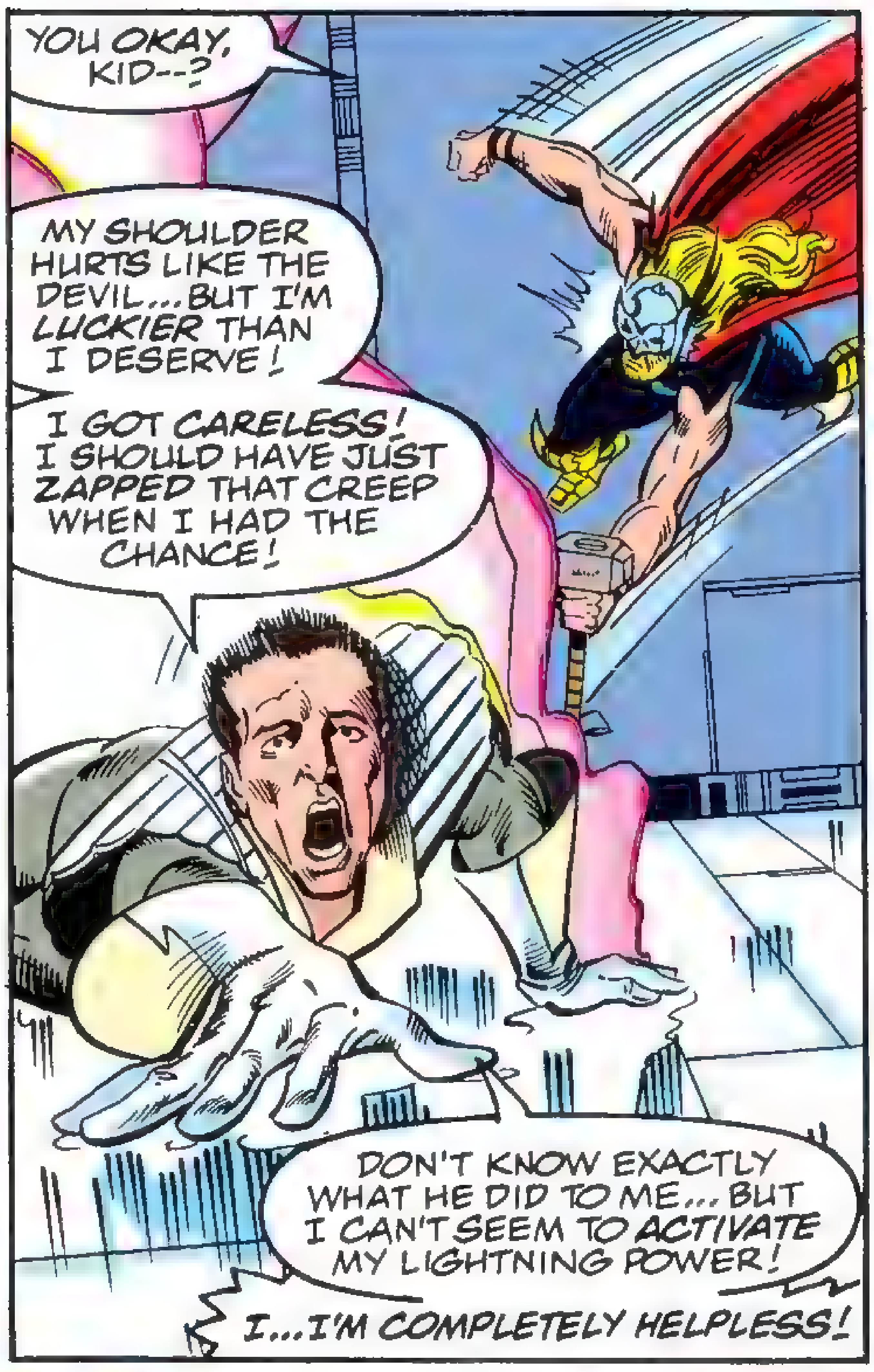

MEANWHILE...
THE EARTH COULD BE CREMATED WHILE WE'RE JUST SITTING HERE!
I HATE THIS INACTIVITY!
WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE--A RUMBLE WITH THE IMPERIAL GUARD?!
KEE-RAAK!
WHAT WAS THAT--?!
TROUBLE IS A PRETTY SAFE BET!
AND, IN A NEARBY CORRIDOR, TITAN INSTINCTIVELY ASSUMES HIS GIANT SIZE, EVEN AS HE STRIKES WITH DEADLY PRECISION...
IF THE KREE HAVE INFILTRATED THE PALACE REGAL... THE MAJESTRIX IS IN SERIOUS PERIL!
I MUST DEAL WITH THIS SABOTEUR, AND ATTEND TO HER SAFETY!
YOU ARE SWIFT FOR ONE SO LARGE, GUARDSMAN--
SWAKK!
--BUT YOU ALSO SEEM DISTRACTED!
THAT COULD PROVE A SEVERE--AND FATAL--MISTAKE!
ESPECIALLY WHEN CONFRONTED BY ONE WHO POSSESSES THE COLLECTIVE STRENGTH OF THE GREATEST KREE WARRIORS OF ALL!
THE SHI'AR WILL NEVER SURVIVE THIS WAR!
THE KREE WILL ERASE YOUR MISBEGOTTEN RACE FROM EXISTENCE!

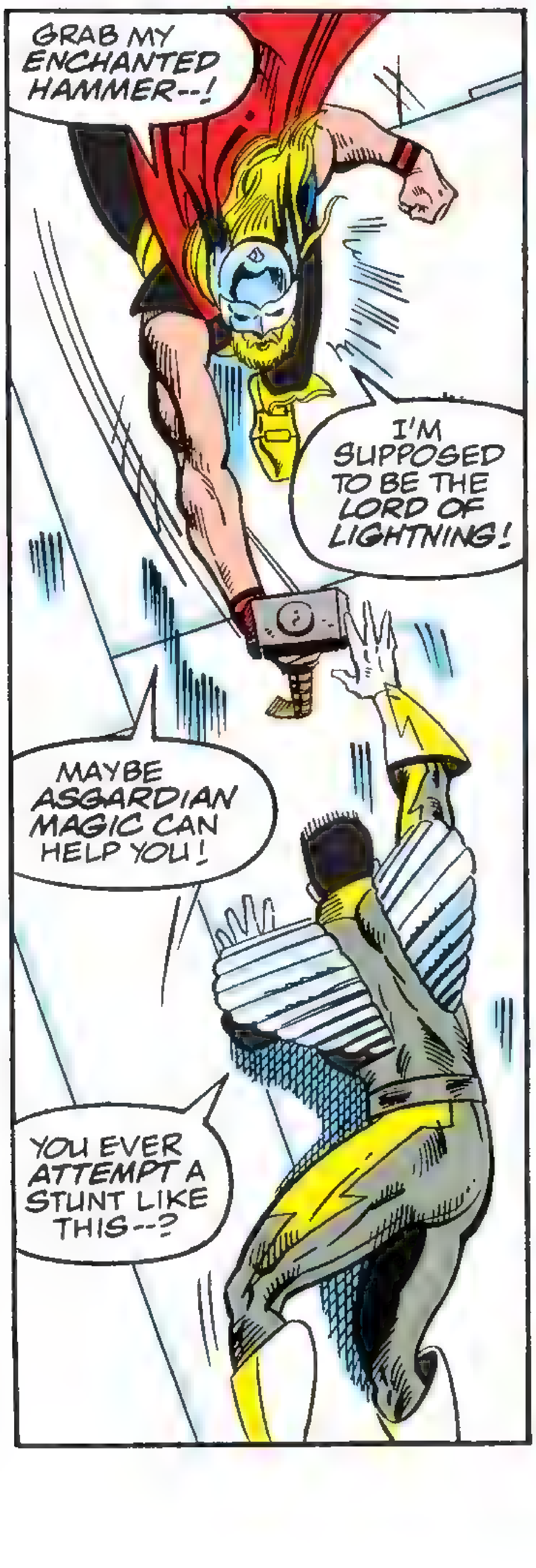

STRIKING WITHOUT RESTRAINT, EMPLOYING ALL OF HIS AWESOME POWER, SUPREMOR LEAPS HIGH ABOVE HIS FALLEN FOE...
AND THEN...
SKA-RASSH!
TITAN--?!
AND, JUST THEN...
THE PALACE IS OBVIOUSLY UNDER ATTACK! SHOULD WE STAY NEUTRAL OR--?
WE WON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE, WITCH... IF WE CAN'T GET PAST THIS STEEL-PLATED DOOR!
STAND ASIDE, LIGHTNING! AND I'LL TRY TO BLAST IT--
CAR-RAM!
--OPEN?!
NO NEED TO THANK ME, LADY!
JUST TRYING TO SPARE YOU ANY UNPLEASANT CONSEQUENCES!
CAPTAIN AMERICA HATES ME! THAT'S THE ONLY REASON WHY HE'D HAVE ASSIGNED YOU TO MY TEAM!
ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE... THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO PROVE OUR GOOD INTENTIONS TO THE SHI'AR!
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
SOMEONE HAD BETTER LOOK IN ON LILANDRA!
I'LL GO! I'VE ALWAYS PREFERRED A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN TO A FIGHT!

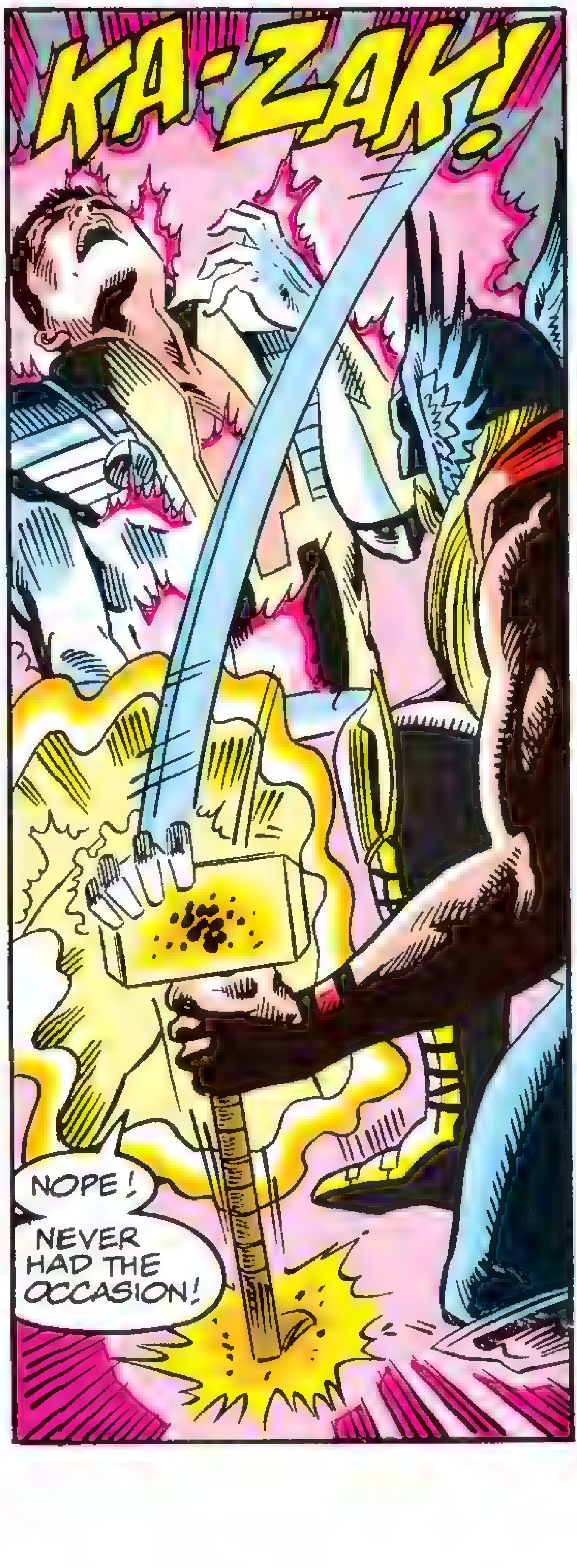

AT THAT MOMENT... FAR, FAR AWAY... THE RECENTLY JETTISONED SHI'AR NEGA-PORTAL GENTLY DRIFTS ON THE VAST, EMPTY SEA OF SPACE!*
*WONDER MAN #8. --NEGA-RALF
BUT THEN...
WONDER MAN! WE SEEM TO BE EXPERIENCING A SUDDEN AND VIOLENT TURBULENCE!
GOLLY GEE... I HADN'T NOTICED!
-WHEW- AT LEAST IT DIDN'T LAST LONG!
YOU GOT ANY IDEA WHAT COULD HAVE CAUSED IT?
YES... BUT I PREFER TO SEEK EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE!
GOOD FOR YOU! I'D SETTLE FOR A COLD BEER!
REDUCING THE DENSITY OF HIS BODY, THE VISION BECOMES A WEIGHTLESS AND INTANGIBLE WRAITH, AND THEN...
THIS ENTIRE COMPLEX IS REALLY A BOMB WHICH CAN EMPLOY THE POWER OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE KREE GALAXY--
--AND WE SEEM TO BE SHIFTING OUR COURSE!
MY THEORY IS CONFIRMED! A NEW FORCE HAS SEIZED CONTROL!
I MUST LEARN WHO--!
SKRULLS--?!

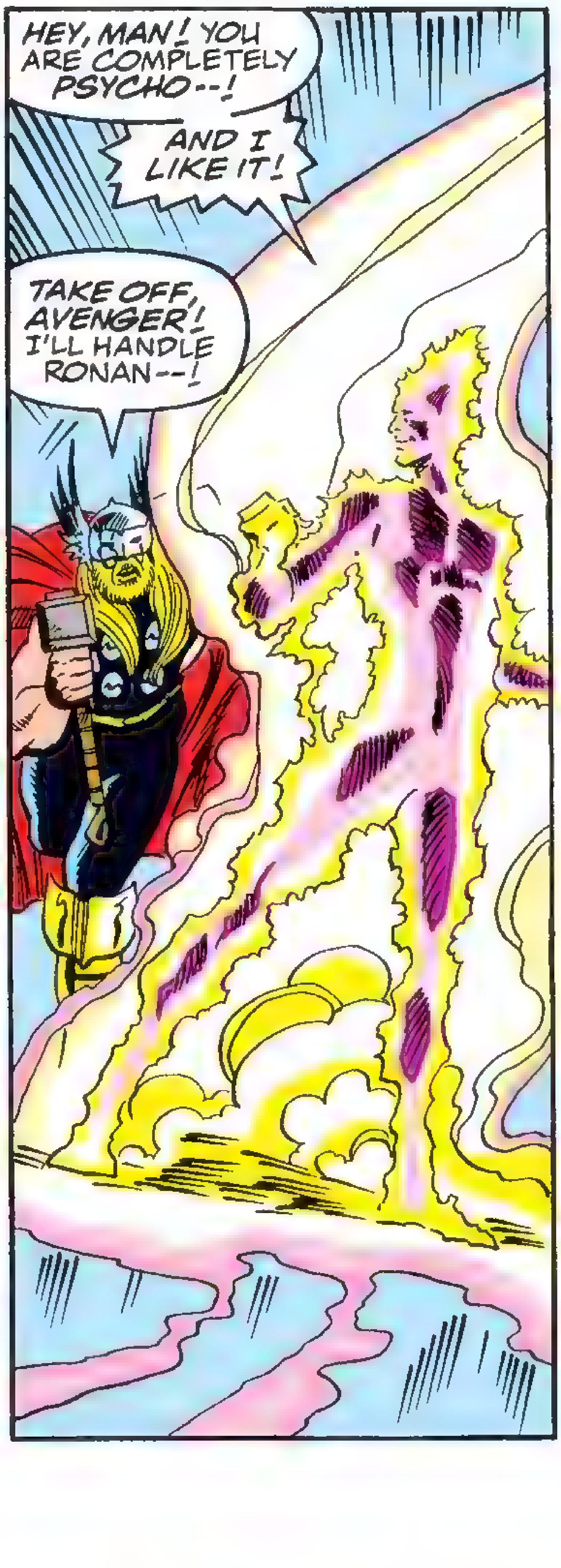
AND, JUST THEN...
MIRA! THAT BIG DUDE IS BLASTING THE ARROGANCE RIGHT OUT OF SMASHER!
IT AIN'T A SIGHT I'M REAL SORRY TO SEE, LIGHTNING... BUT I GUESS WE'VE GOT TO HELP HIM, ANYWAY!
DO NOT INTERFERE! I AM RONAN, THE PUBLIC ACCUSER!
I HAVE COME TO METE OUT JUSTICE IN THE NAME OF THE KREE RACE!
ONE MAN'S NOTION OF JUSTICE IS ANOTHER'S OUTRAGE!
ESPECIALLY DURING A TIME OF WAR!
UP AND AT 'IM, SMASHER! THE FUN'S JUST STARTING!
UNHAND ME, THOR! YOUR AID IS NEITHER REQUESTED... NOR APPRECIATED!
SUIT YOURSELF, SMILEY! I'M NOT THE ONE SUCKING FLOOR!
I WARN YOU ALL--! LILANDRA HAS ALREADY BEEN JUDGED GUILTY OF HEINOUS WAR CRIMES!
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS--!
SHE--AND ALL WHO SHIELD HER--WILL PAY THE EXTREME PENALTY!
YOU CAN'T EXPECT US TO ALLOW YOU TO MURDER HER!
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE!
BEHOLD HOW EASILY MY UNIVERSAL WEAPON NEGATES YOU!
DIOS MIO! I... I'M REVERTING TO HUMAN FORM!


IT IS LITTLE WONDER THE KREE HAVE PASSED ITS *ZENITH*, RONAN!
YOU CONCENTRATE ON A YOUNG PRIMITIVE, WHILE A *TRUE WARRIOR* STANDS BEFORE YOU!
YOU GREATLY *EXAGGERATE* YOUR OWN IMPORTANCE, SMASHER!
A *FAILING* SUFFERED BY YOUR ENTIRE RACE!
URRK!

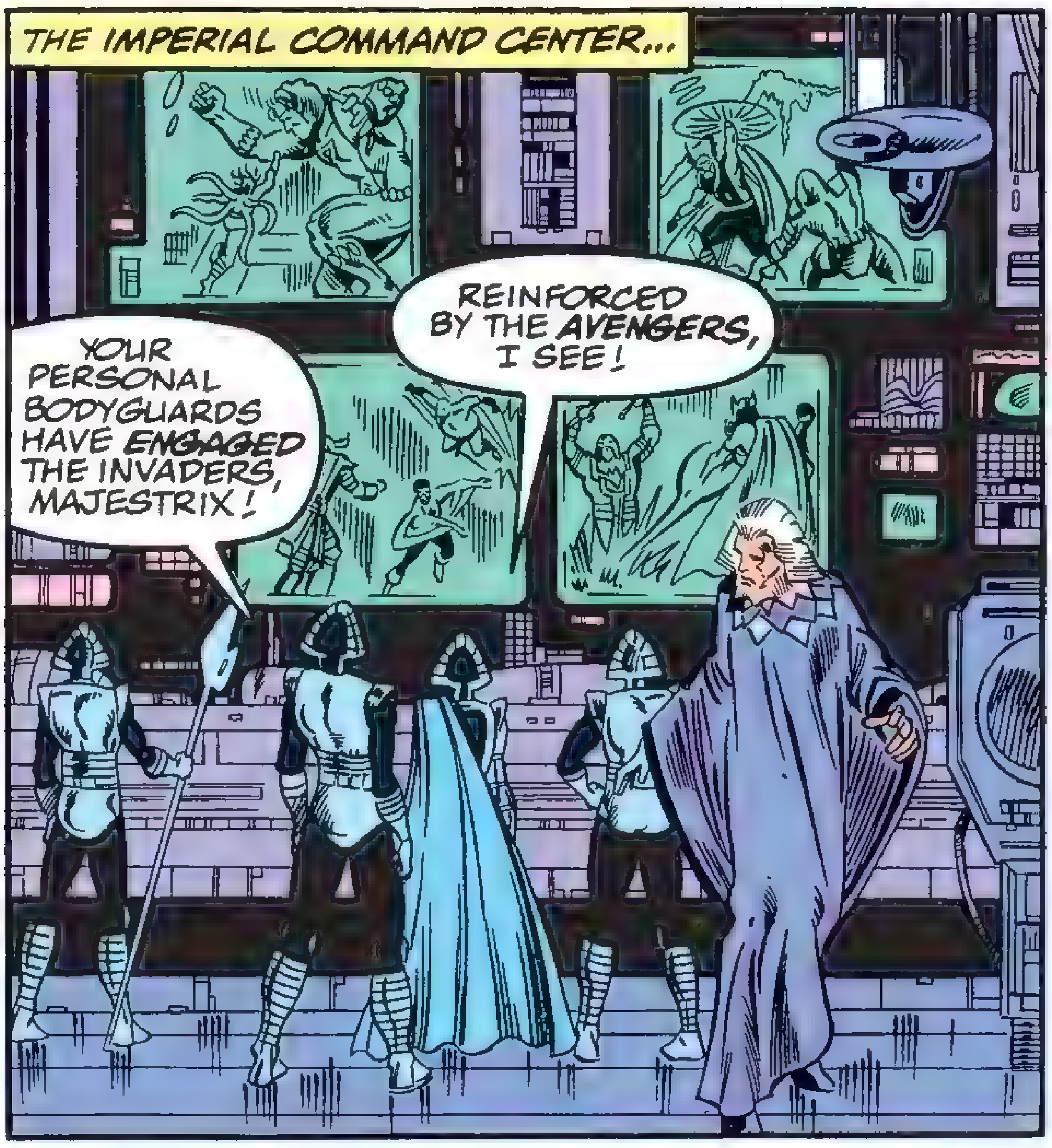

YOU *OKAY*, KID--?
MY SHOULDER HURTS LIKE THE DEVIL... BUT I'M *LUCKIER* THAN I DESERVE!
I GOT *CARELESS!* I SHOULD HAVE JUST *ZAPPED* THAT CREEP WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE!
DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HE DID TO ME... BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO *ACTIVATE* MY LIGHTNING POWER!
I... I'M COMPLETELY HELPLESS!

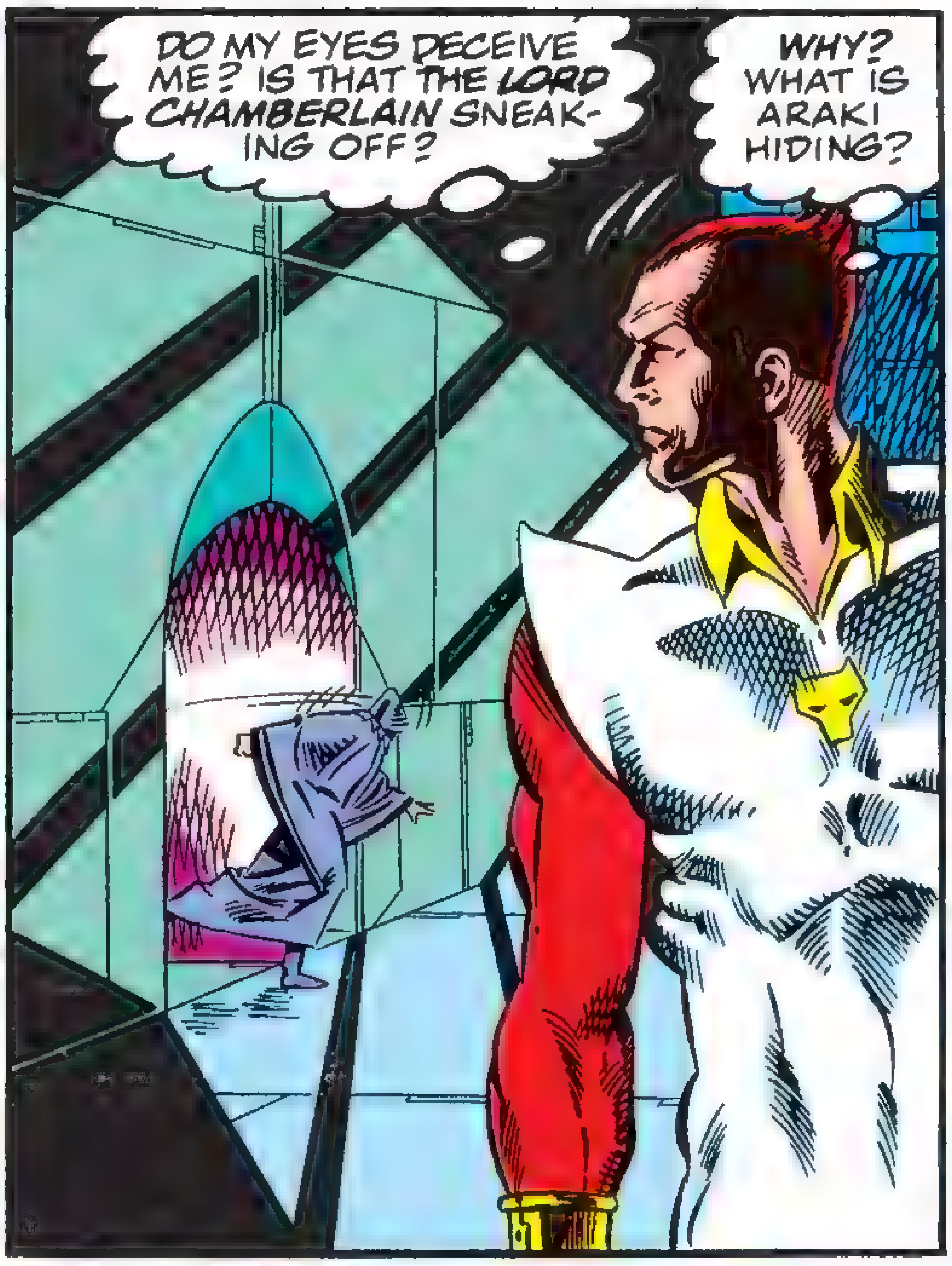

GRAB MY *ENCHANTED HAMMER*--!
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE *LORD OF LIGHTNING!*
MAYBE *ASGARDIAN MAGIC* CAN HELP YOU!
YOU EVER *ATTEMPT* A STUNT LIKE THIS--?

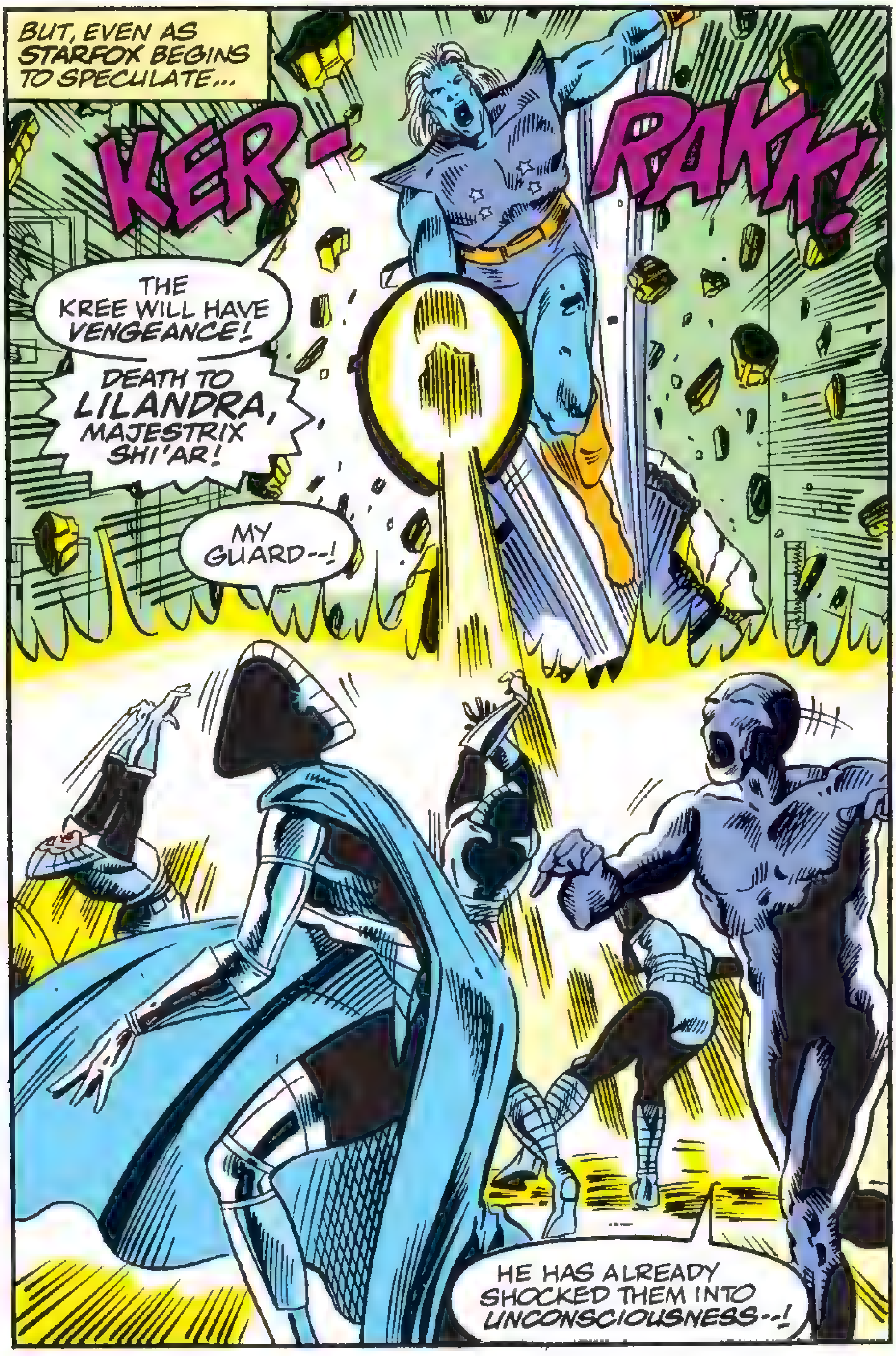

KA-ZAK!
NOPE!
NEVER HAD THE OCCASION!

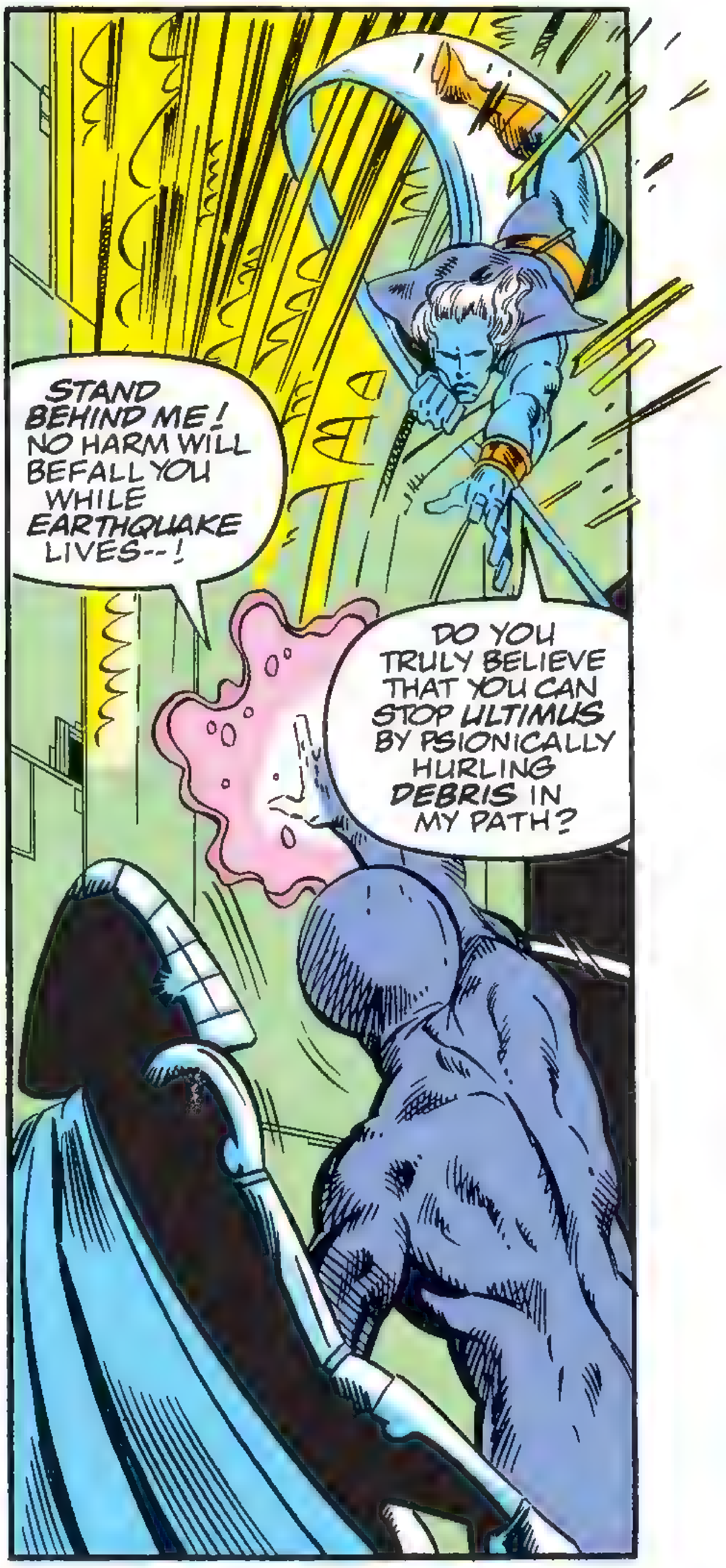

HEY, MAN! YOU ARE COMPLETELY PSYCHO--!
AND I LIKE IT!
TAKE OFF, AVENGER! I'LL HANDLE RONAN--!

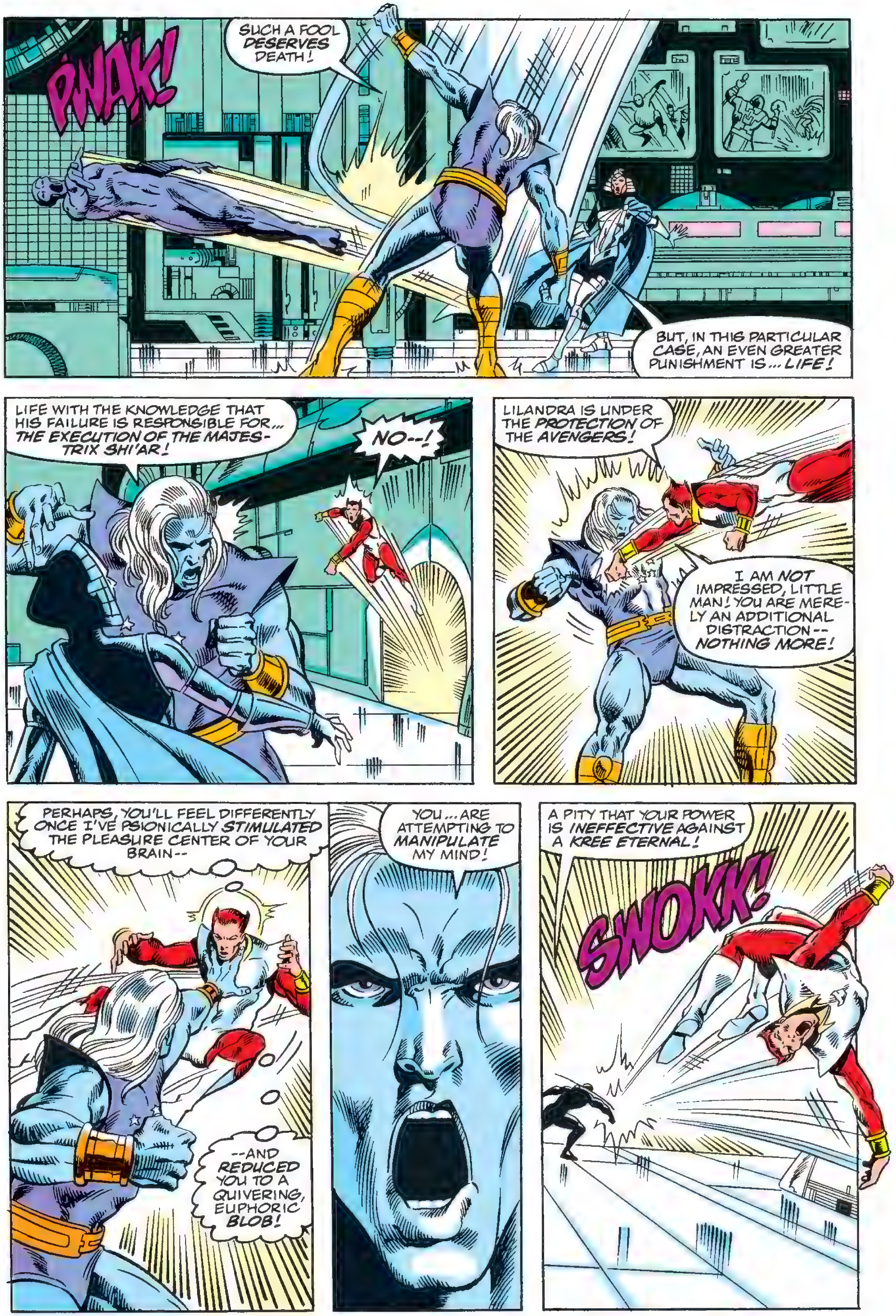
AND, NEARBY...
INITIATING VISUAL AND ORAL RECORD FOR HALA COMMAND AND CONTROL!
AGENT SHATTERAX ENGAGING SHI'AR DESIGNATE "HARDBALL"!
I AM VERY SURPRISED THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO PRESERVE THIS BATTLE, MY FRIEND!
MOST WARRIORS PREFER TO HIDE DEFEATS FROM THEIR SUPERIORS!
OF COURSE, THAT LEADS TO INEFFICIENT MANAGEMENT!
TARGET SPEED AND AGILITY RENDER CHARGED PARTICLE BEAMS INEFFECTIVE!
ALTERING STRATEGY TO ENSNARE TARGET!
WHAT--?!
OBJECTIVE: ACHIEVED!
LOOKS LIKE I ARRIVED JUST IN TIME!
HARDBALL IS DEAD MEAT UNLESS--
SECONDARY HOSTILE DETECTED!
I DID IT! MANAGED TO CONVERT INTO MICROWAVES... AND SLICE THROUGH HIS PRISON!

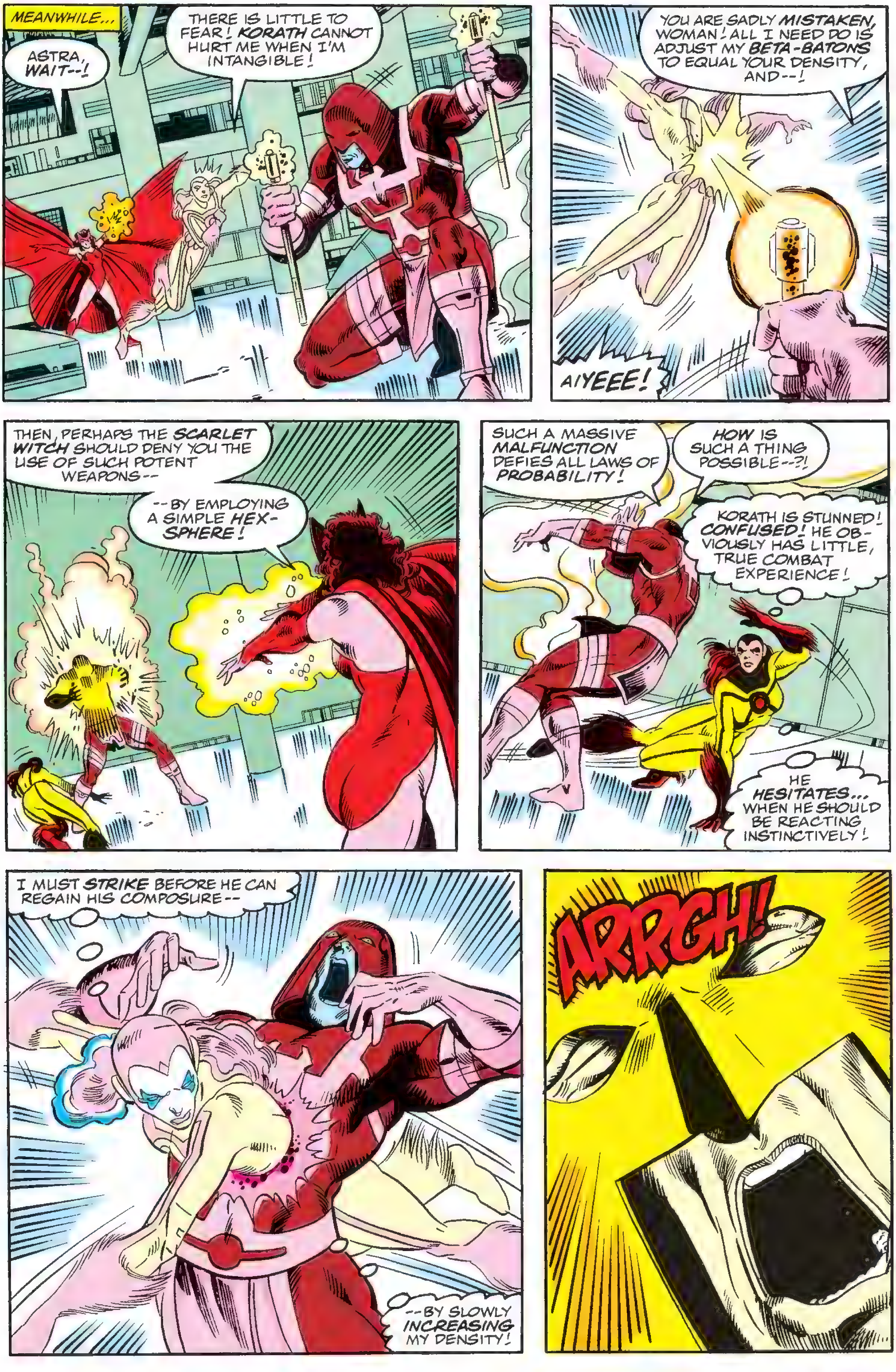

THE IMPERIAL COMMAND CENTER...
YOUR PERSONAL BODYGUARDS HAVE ENGAGED THE INVADERS, MAJESTRIX!
REINFORCED BY THE AVENGERS, I SEE!

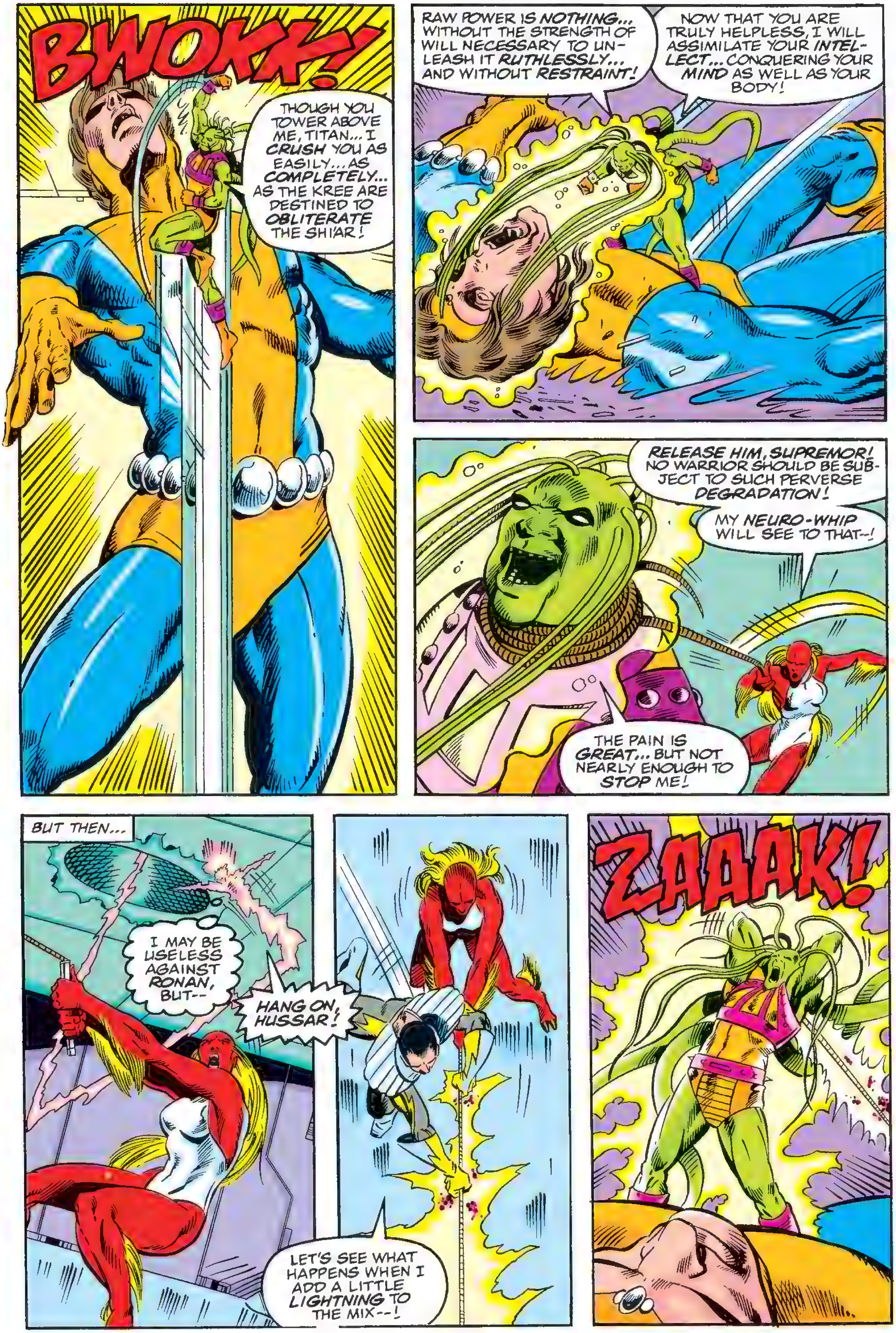

DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME? IS THAT THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN SNEAKING OFF?
WHY? WHAT IS ARAKI HIDING?

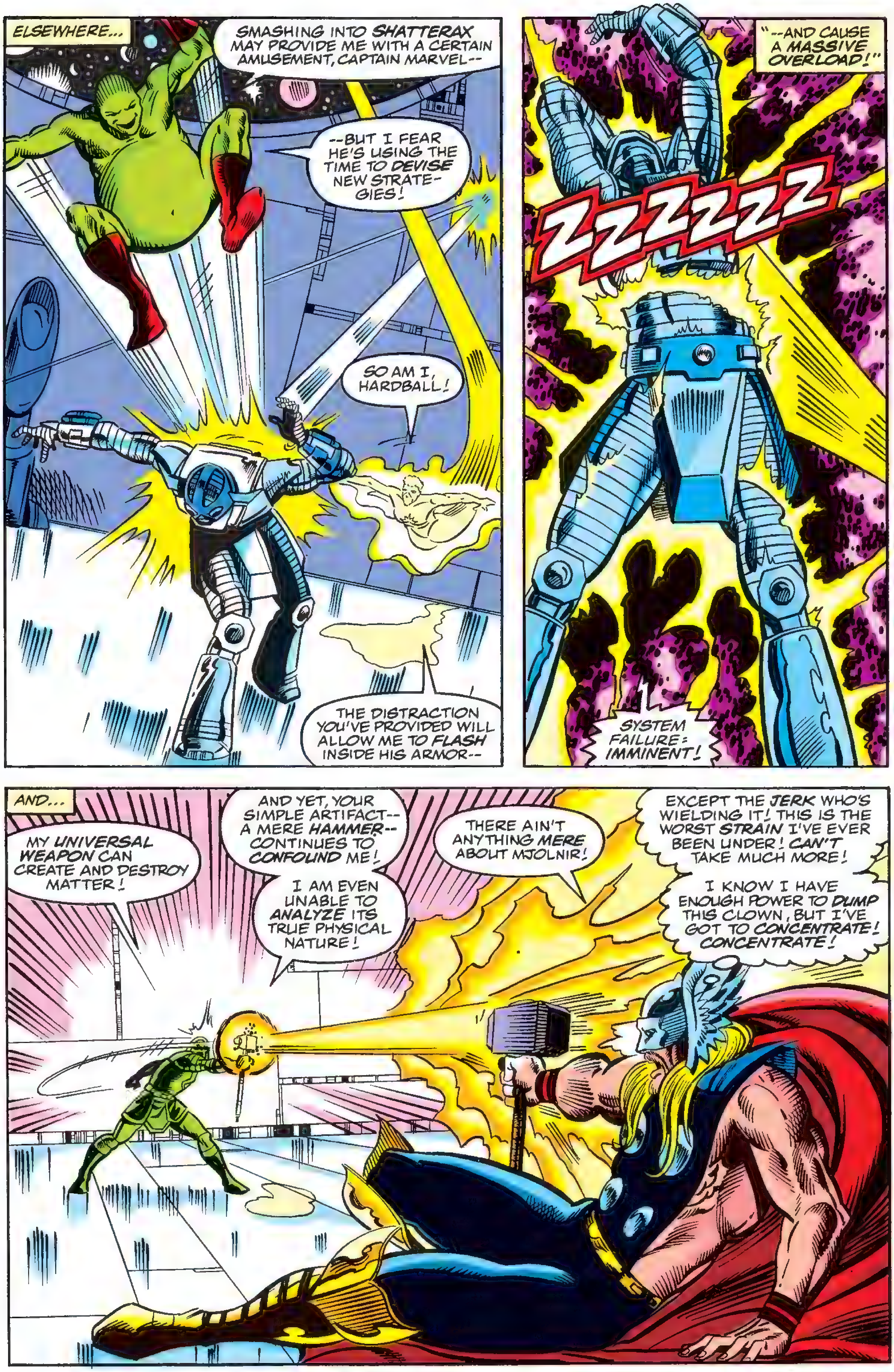

BUT, EVEN AS STARFOX BEGINS TO SPECULATE...
KER-RAKK!
THE KREE WILL HAVE VENGEANCE!
DEATH TO LILANDRA, MAJESTRIX SHI'AR!
MY GUARD--!
HE HAS ALREADY SHOCKED THEM INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS--!

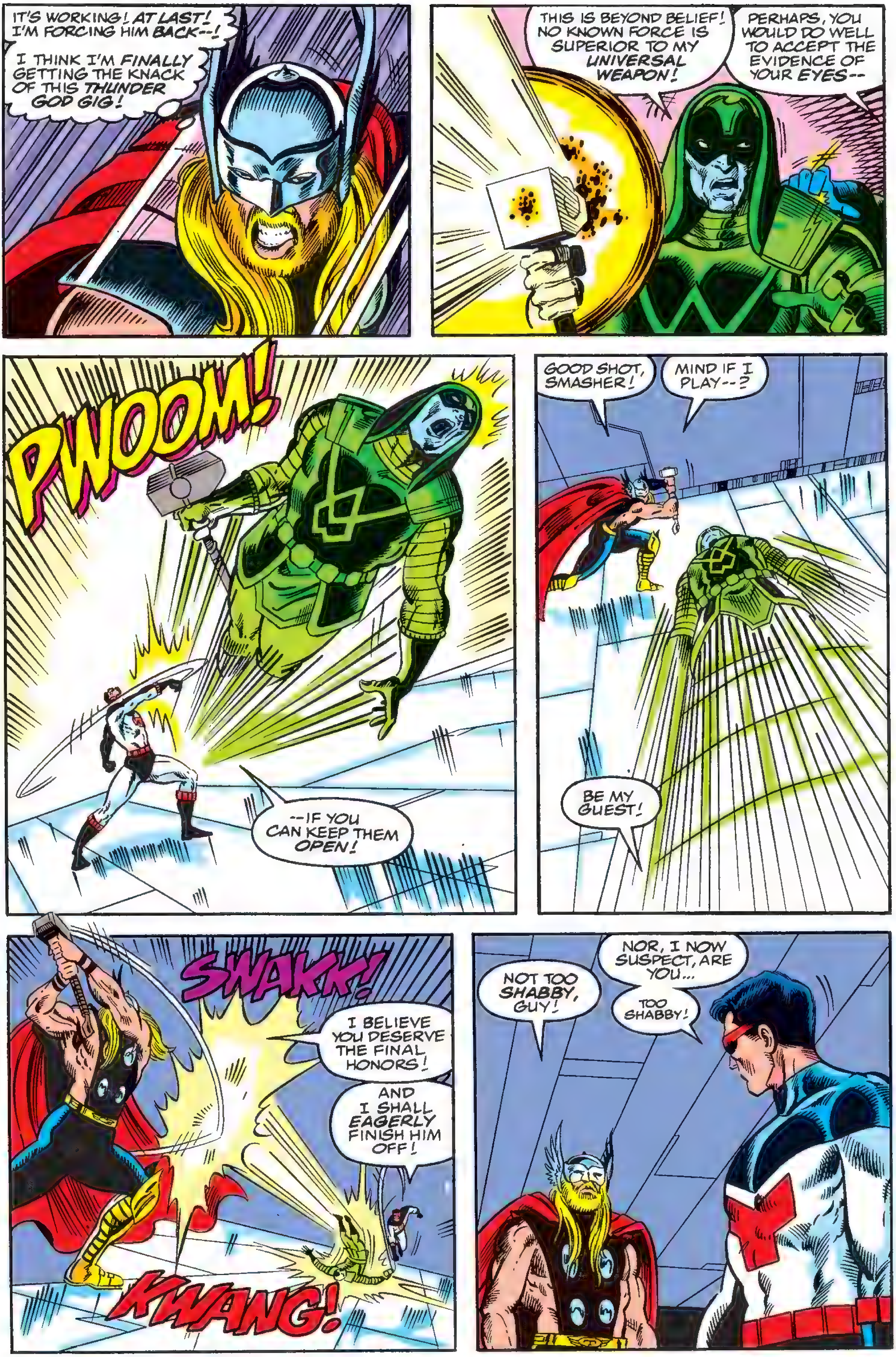

STAND BEHIND ME! NO HARM WILL BEFALL YOU WHILE EARTHQUAKE LIVES--!
DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN STOP ULTIMUS BY PSIONICALLY HURLING DEBRIS IN MY PATH?

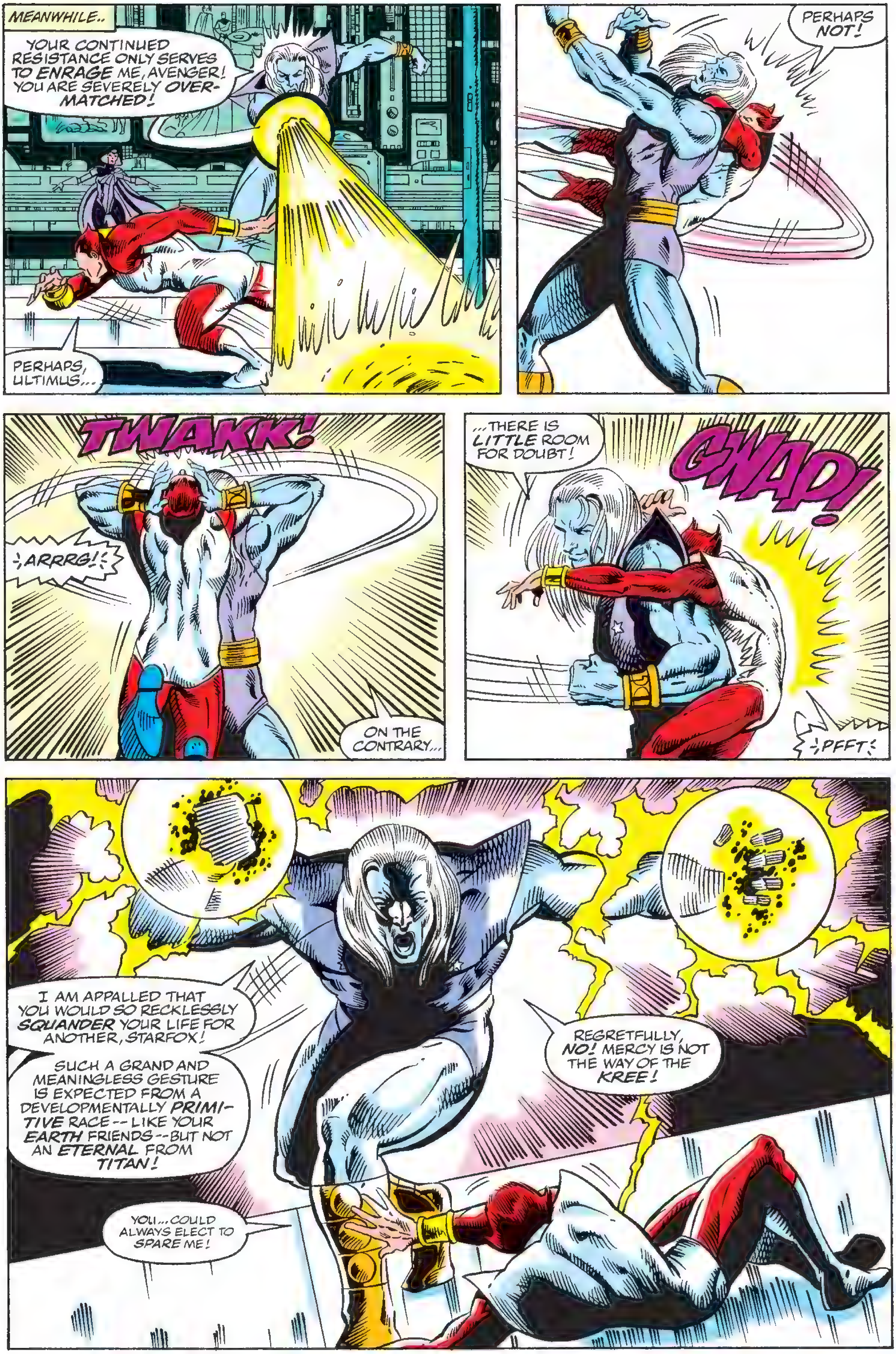

PWAK!
SUCH A FOOL DESERVES DEATH!
BUT, IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, AN EVEN GREATER PUNISHMENT IS... LIFE!
LIFE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HIS FAILURE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR... THE EXECUTION OF THE MAJESTRIX SHI'AR!
NO--!
LILANDRA IS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE AVENGERS!
I AM NOT IMPRESSED, LITTLE MAN! YOU ARE MERELY AN ADDITIONAL DISTRACTION-- NOTHING MORE!
PERHAPS, YOU'LL FEEL DIFFERENTLY ONCE I'VE PSIONICALLY STIMULATED THE PLEASURE CENTER OF YOUR BRAIN--
--AND REDUCED YOU TO A QUIVERING, EUPHORIC BLOB!
YOU... ARE ATTEMPTING TO MANIPULATE MY MIND!
A PITY THAT YOUR POWER IS INEFFECTIVE AGAINST A KREE ETERNAL!
SWOKK!

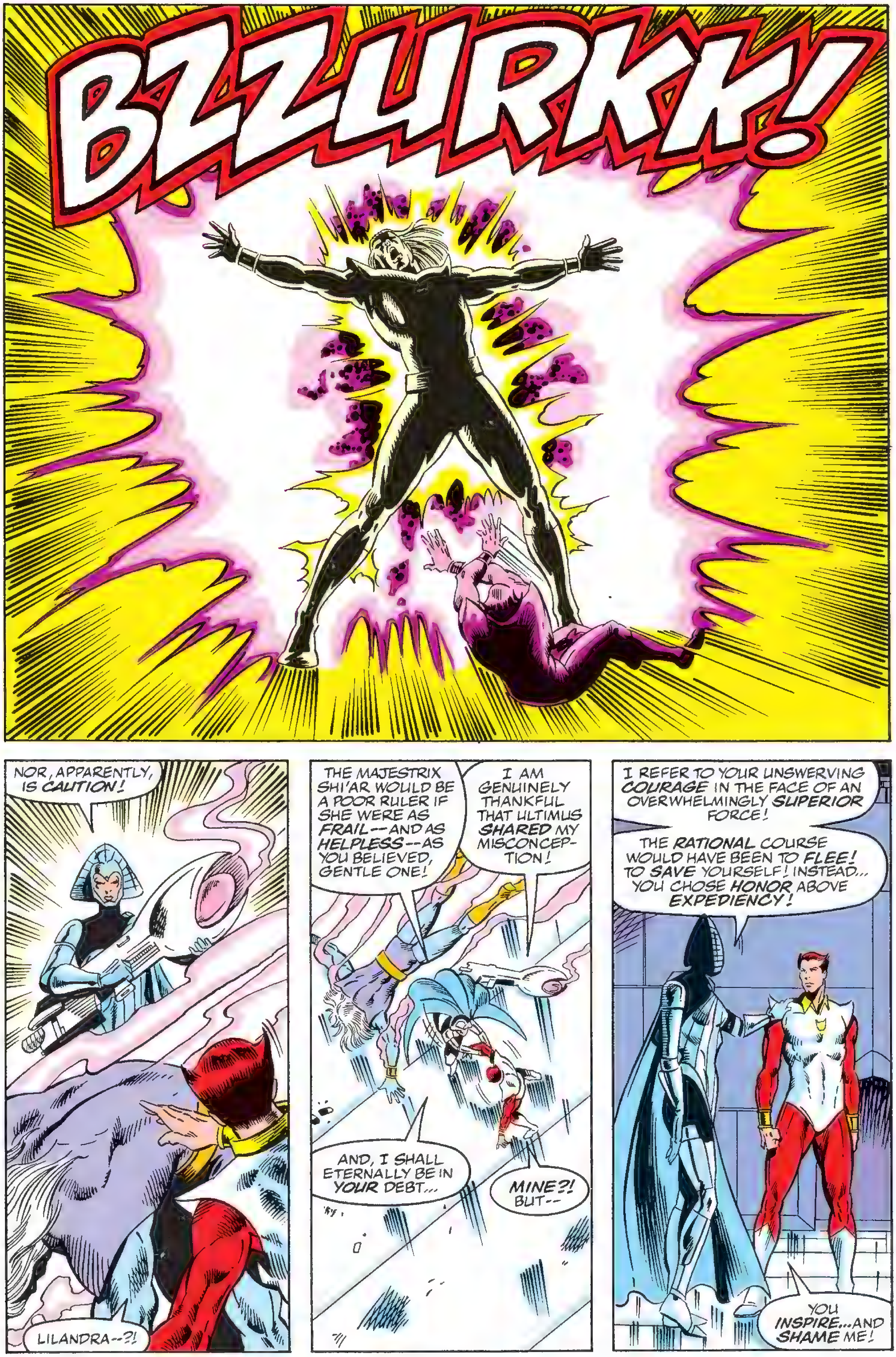

MEANWHILE...
ASTRA, WAIT--!
THERE IS LITTLE TO FEAR! KORATH CANNOT HURT ME WHEN I'M INTANGIBLE!
YOU ARE SADLY MISTAKEN, WOMAN! ALL I NEED DO IS ADJUST MY BETA-BATONS TO EQUAL YOUR DENSITY, AND--!
AIYEEE!
THEN, PERHAPS THE SCARLET WITCH SHOULD DENY YOU THE USE OF SUCH POTENT WEAPONS--
--BY EMPLOYING A SIMPLE HEX-SPHERE!
SUCH A MASSIVE MALFUNCTION DEFIES ALL LAWS OF PROBABILITY!
HOW IS SUCH A THING POSSIBLE--?!
KORATH IS STUNNED! CONFUSED! HE OBVIOUSLY HAS LITTLE, TRUE COMBAT EXPERIENCE!
HE HESITATES... WHEN HE SHOULD BE REACTING INSTINCTIVELY!
I MUST STRIKE BEFORE HE CAN REGAIN HIS COMPOSURE--
--BY SLOWLY INCREASING MY DENSITY!
ARRGH!


BWOKK!
THOUGH YOU TOWER ABOVE ME, TITAN... I CRUSH YOU AS EASILY... AS COMPLETELY... AS THE KREE ARE DESTINED TO OBLITERATE THE SHI'AR!
RAW POWER IS NOTHING... WITHOUT THE STRENGTH OF WILL NECESSARY TO UNLEASH IT RUTHLESSLY... AND WITHOUT RESTRAINT!
NOW THAT YOU ARE TRULY HELPLESS, I WILL ASSIMILATE YOUR INTELLECT... CONQUERING YOUR MIND AS WELL AS YOUR BODY!
RELEASE HIM, SUPREMOR! NO WARRIOR SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO SUCH PERVERSE DEGRADATION!
MY NEURO-WHIP WILL SEE TO THAT--!
THE PAIN IS GREAT... BUT NOT NEARLY ENOUGH TO STOP ME!
BUT THEN...
I MAY BE USELESS AGAINST RONAN, BUT--
HANG ON, HUSSAR!
LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ADD A LITTLE LIGHTNING TO THE MIX--!
ZAAAK!


ELSEWHERE...
SMASHING INTO SHATTERAX MAY PROVIDE ME WITH A CERTAIN AMUSEMENT, CAPTAIN MARVEL--
--BUT I FEAR HE'S USING THE TIME TO DEVISE NEW STRATEGIES!
SO AM I, HARDBALL!
THE DISTRACTION YOU'VE PROVIDED WILL ALLOW ME TO FLASH INSIDE HIS ARMOR--
"--AND CAUSE A MASSIVE OVERLOAD!"
ZZZZZZZ
SYSTEM FAILURE: IMMINENT!
AND...
MY UNIVERSAL WEAPON CAN CREATE AND DESTROY MATTER!
AND YET, YOUR SIMPLE ARTIFACT-- A MERE HAMMER-- CONTINUES TO CONFOUND ME!
I AM EVEN UNABLE TO ANALYZE ITS TRUE PHYSICAL NATURE!
THERE AIN'T ANYTHING MERE ABOUT MJOLNIR!
EXCEPT THE JERK WHO'S WIELDING IT! THIS IS THE WORST STRAIN I'VE EVER BEEN UNDER! CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE!
I KNOW I HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO DUMP THIS CLOWN, BUT I'VE GOT TO CONCENTRATE! CONCENTRATE!


IT'S WORKING! AT LAST! I'M FORCING HIM BACK--!
I THINK I'M FINALLY GETTING THE KNACK OF THIS THUNDER GOD GIG!
THIS IS BEYOND BELIEF! NO KNOWN FORCE IS SUPERIOR TO MY UNIVERSAL WEAPON!
PERHAPS, YOU WOULD DO WELL TO ACCEPT THE EVIDENCE OF YOUR EYES--
PWOOM!
--IF YOU CAN KEEP THEM OPEN!
GOOD SHOT, SMASHER!
MIND IF I PLAY--?
BE MY GUEST!
SWAKK!
I BELIEVE YOU DESERVE THE FINAL HONORS!
AND I SHALL EAGERLY FINISH HIM OFF!
KWANG!
NOT TOO SHABBY, GUY!
NOR, I NOW SUSPECT, ARE YOU...
TOO SHABBY!


MEANWHILE..
YOUR CONTINUED RESISTANCE ONLY SERVES TO **ENRAGE** ME, AVENGER! YOU ARE SEVERELY **OVER-MATCHED!**
PERHAPS, ULTIMUS...
PERHAPS **NOT!**
TWAKK!
¡ARRRG!¡
ON THE CONTRARY...
...THERE IS **LITTLE** ROOM FOR DOUBT!
GWAP!
¡PFFT¡
I AM APPALLED THAT YOU WOULD SO RECKLESSLY **SQUANDER** YOUR LIFE FOR ANOTHER, STARFOX!
SUCH A GRAND AND MEANINGLESS GESTURE IS EXPECTED FROM A DEVELOPMENTALLY **PRIMITIVE** RACE--LIKE YOUR **EARTH** FRIENDS--BUT NOT AN **ETERNAL** FROM **TITAN!**
YOU...COULD ALWAYS ELECT TO SPARE ME!
REGRETFULLY, **NO!** MERCY IS NOT THE WAY OF THE **KREE!**


BZZURKK!
NOR, APPARENTLY, IS CAUTION!
LILANDRA--?!
THE MAJESTRIX SHI'AR WOULD BE A POOR RULER IF SHE WERE AS FRAIL--AND AS HELPLESS--AS YOU BELIEVED, GENTLE ONE!
I AM GENUINELY THANKFUL THAT ULTIMUS SHARED MY MISCONCEPTION!
AND, I SHALL ETERNALLY BE IN YOUR DEBT...
MINE?! BUT--
I REFER TO YOUR UNSWERVING COURAGE IN THE FACE OF AN OVERWHELMINGLY SUPERIOR FORCE!
THE RATIONAL COURSE WOULD HAVE BEEN TO FLEE! TO SAVE YOURSELF! INSTEAD... YOU CHOSE HONOR ABOVE EXPEDIENCY!
YOU INSPIRE...AND SHAME ME!

IN THE NAME OF EFFICIENCY, CALCULATING ONLY THE BENEFITS, BUT NONE OF THE HORRIFYING COSTS... I CALLOUSLY LAUNCHED THE NEGA-BOMB!
A WEAPON CAPABLE OF ANNHILATING THE ENTIRE KREE EMPIRE!
IT SHALL BE RECALLED!
TOO MANY INNOCENT LIVES HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST! WE MUST NEGOTIATE WITH OUR ENEMIES... AND END THIS MAD WAR!
HOWEVER, AT THAT EXACT INSTANT...
BEGIN FINAL PREPARATIONS! ONCE WE HAVE CROSSED THE STARGATE INTO KREE SPACE, THE NEGA-BOMB MUST BE LAUNCHED--
--AND DETONATED!!
THE ACTION CONTINUES IN CAPTAIN AMERICA #400!

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PART 15
CAPTAIN AMERICA®
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400TH ISSUE
SPECTACULAR!
LEVINS/PANOSIAN

THE WAR BETWEEN THE INTERGALACTIC EMPIRES OF THE ***KREE*** *AND THE* ***SHI'AR*** *HAS REACHED A HEAD WITH THE IMMINENT DETONATION OF THE NEGA-BOMB IN THE HEART OF THE KREE GALAXY. AS YET UNAWARE OF THE IMPENDING DOOM, THE* ***STAR-SPANGLED AVENGER*** *FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE ON THE KREE HOMEWORLD. . .*

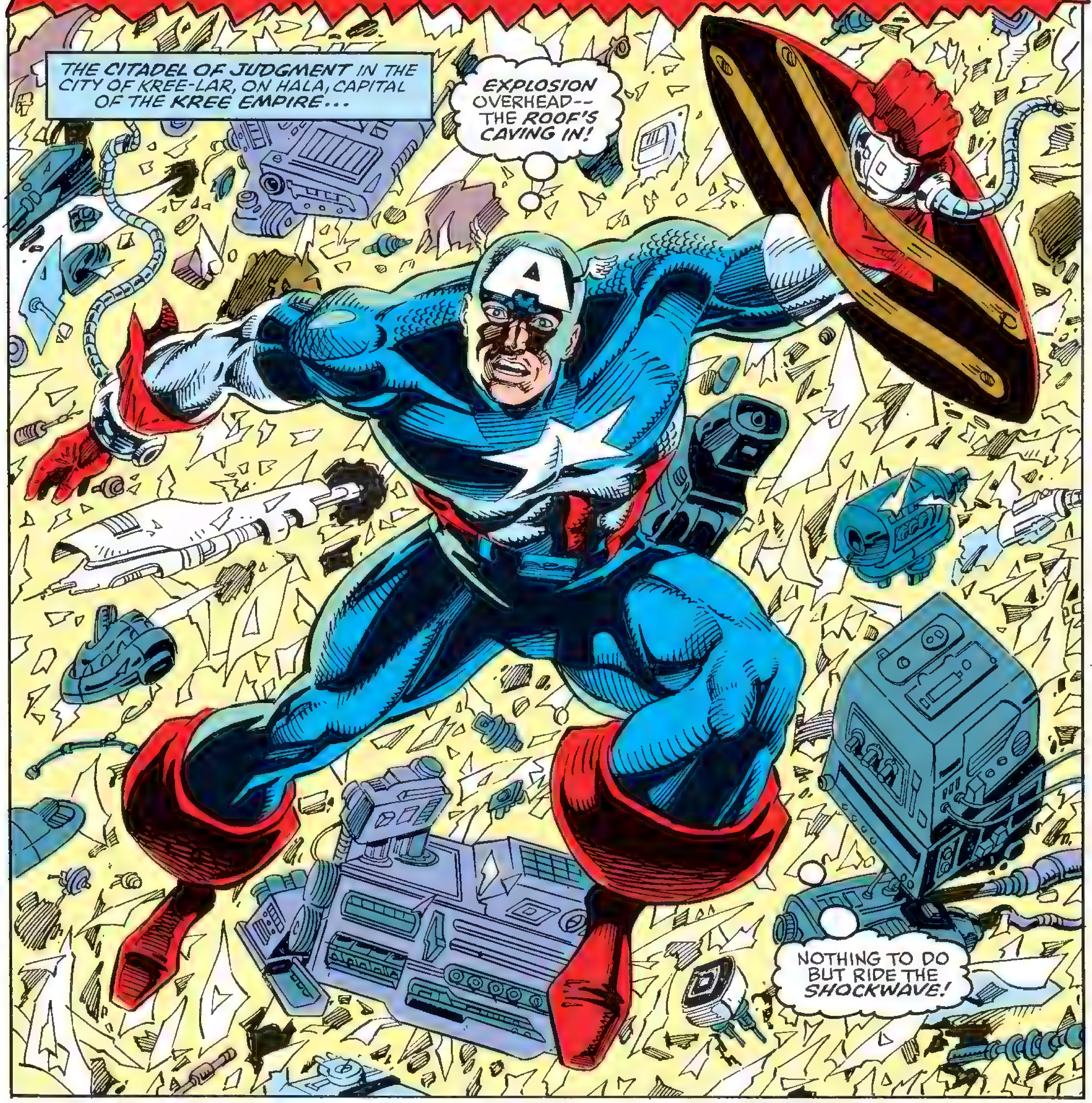
STAN LEE PRESENTS:

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

PART 15

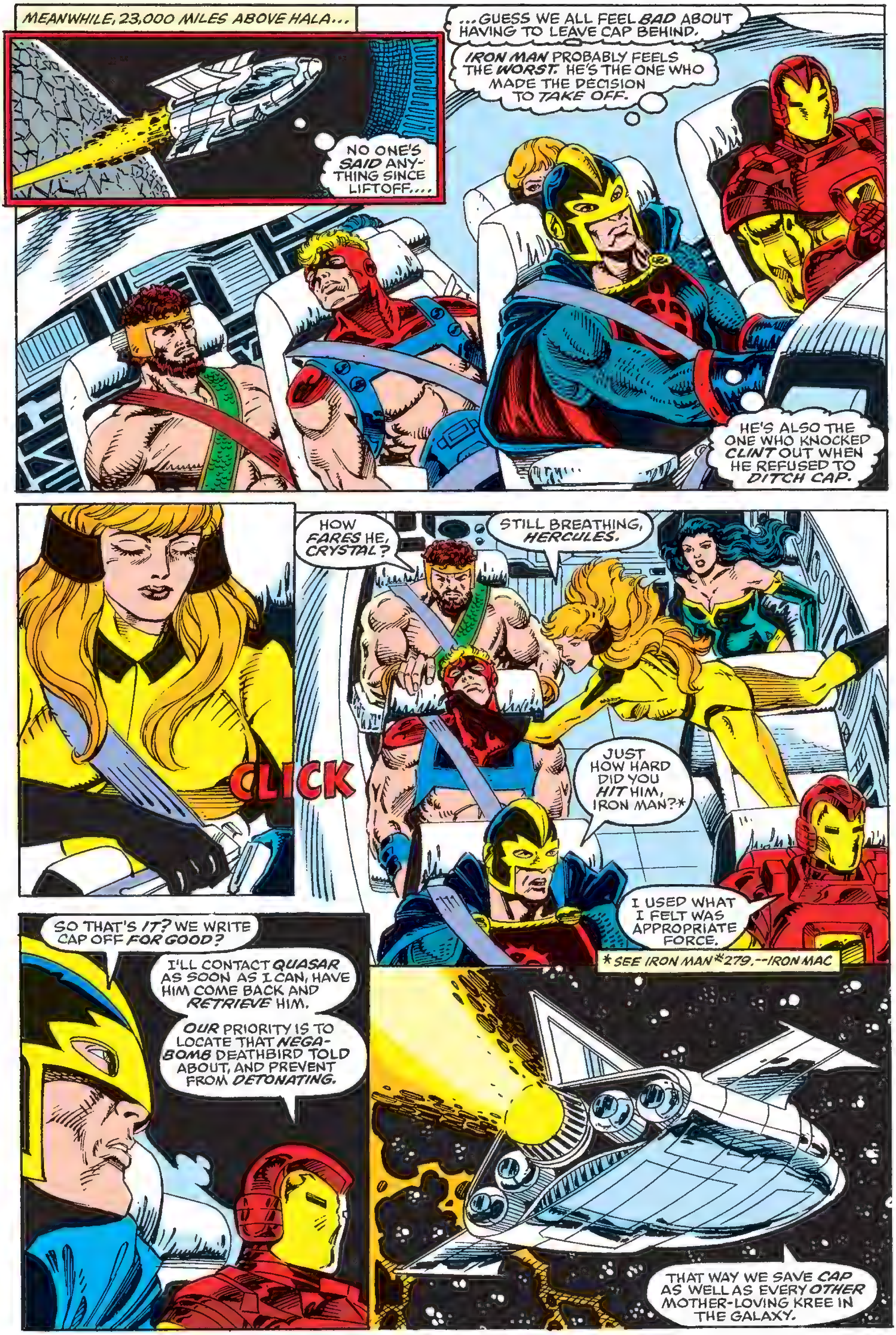
CAPTAIN AMERICA

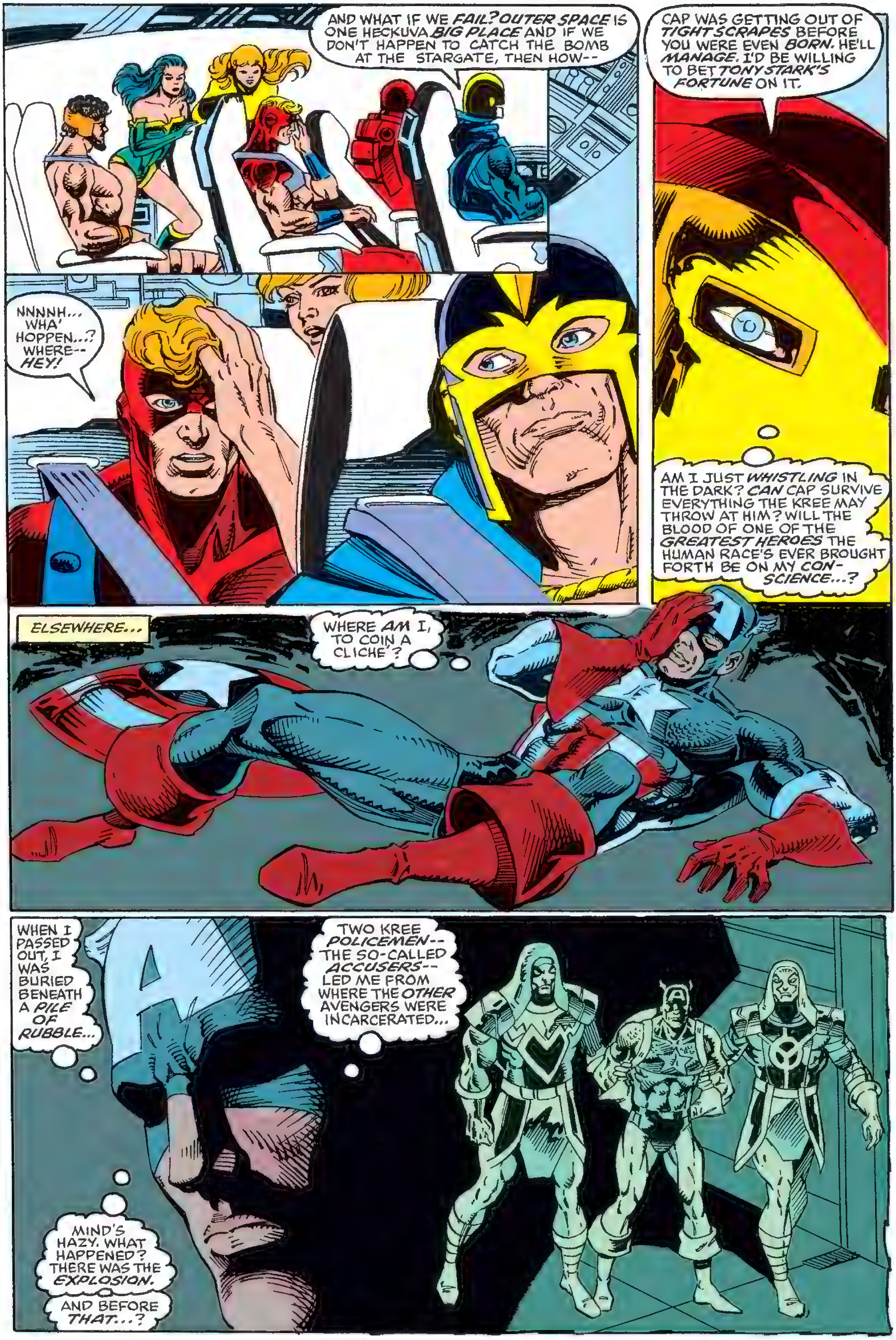
MURDER BY DECREE!

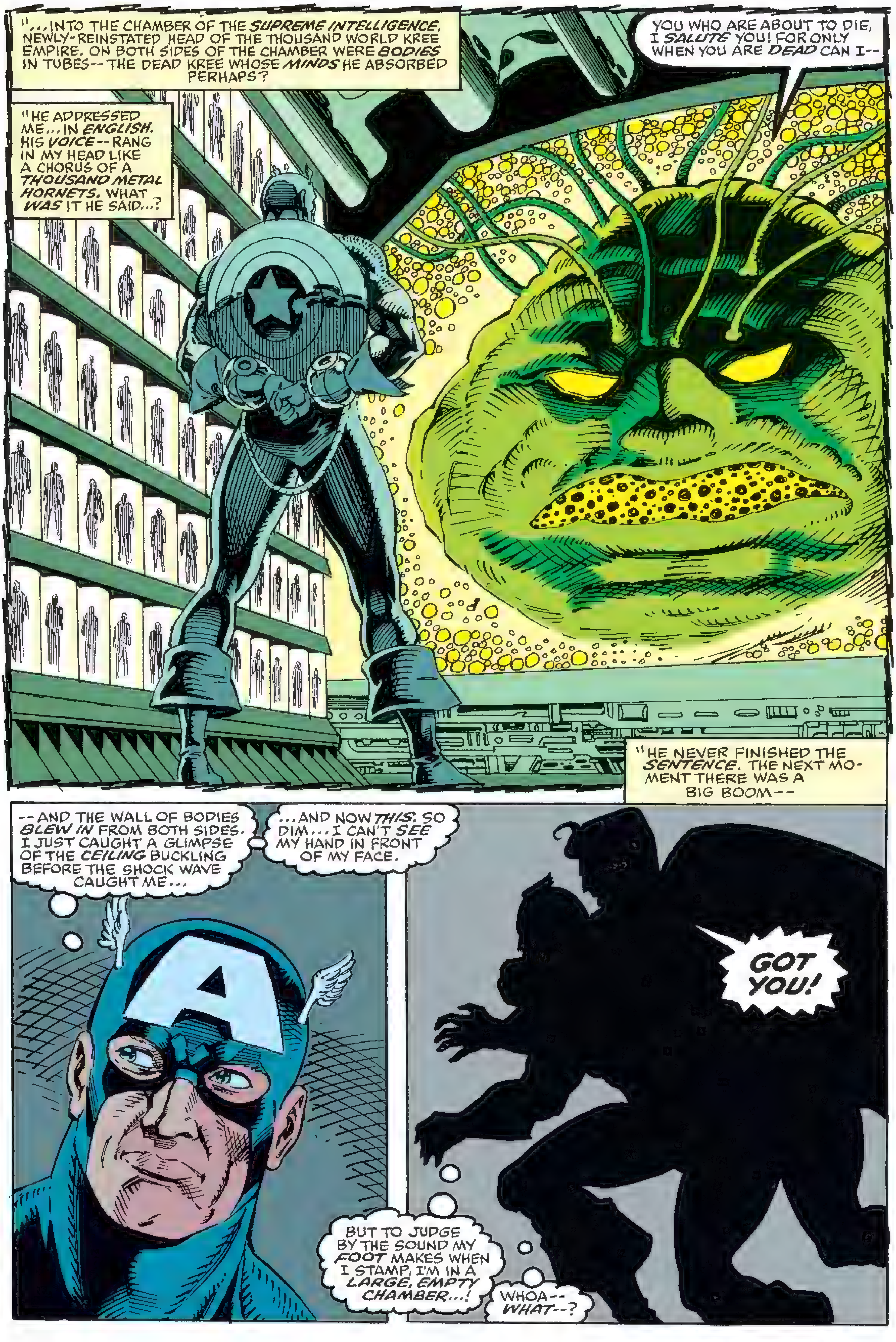

THE *CITADEL OF JUDGMENT* IN THE CITY OF KREE-LAR, ON HALA, CAPITAL OF THE *KREE EMPIRE*...
EXPLOSION OVERHEAD-- THE *ROOF'S CAVING IN!*
NOTHING TO DO BUT RIDE THE *SHOCKWAVE!*

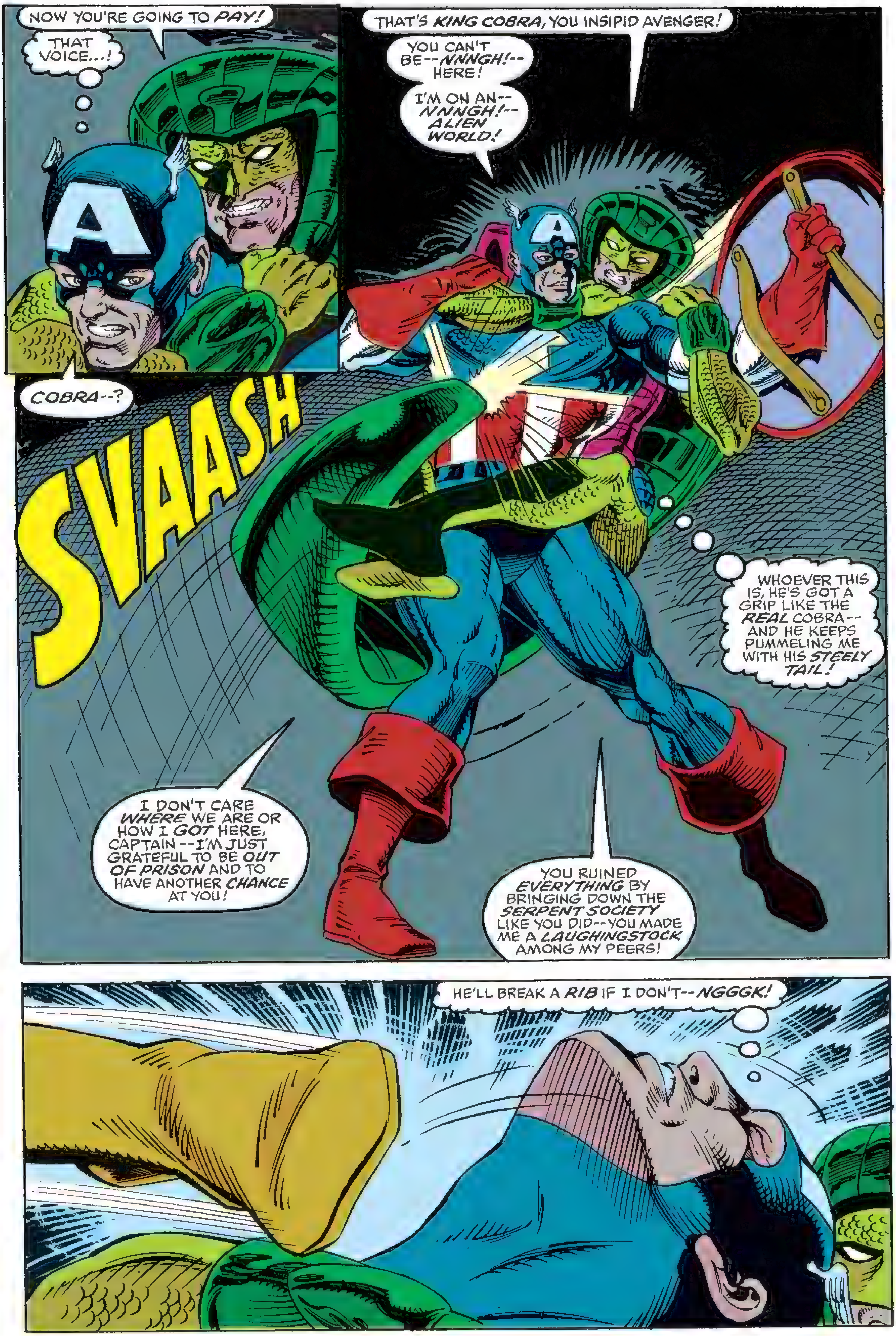
A 400TH ISSUE EXTRAVAGANZA BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ***CAP TEAM SUPREME...***
MARK GRUENWALD *WRITER*
RIK LEVINS *PENCILER*
DANNY BULANADI *INKER*
JOE ROSEN *LETTERER*
CHRISTIE SCHEELE *COLORIST*
RALPH MACCHIO *EDITOR*
TOM DEFALCO *EDITOR SUPREME*

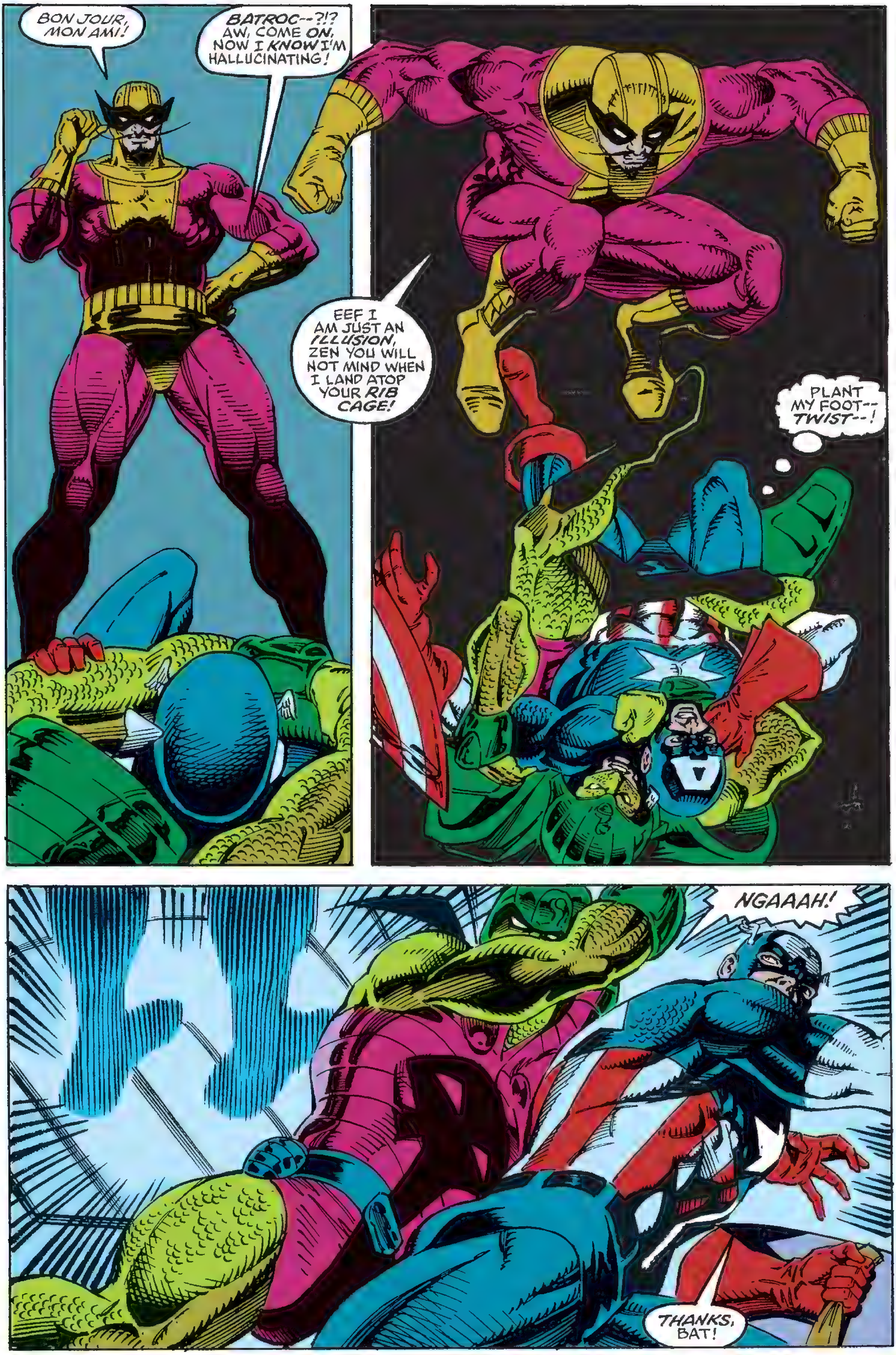
HIT THE *WALL*--
--STILL *CONSCIOUS*--
--NOWHERE TO *GO*--
--*DEBRIS* STILL RAINING DOWN--
--GOING TO BE *BURIED!*

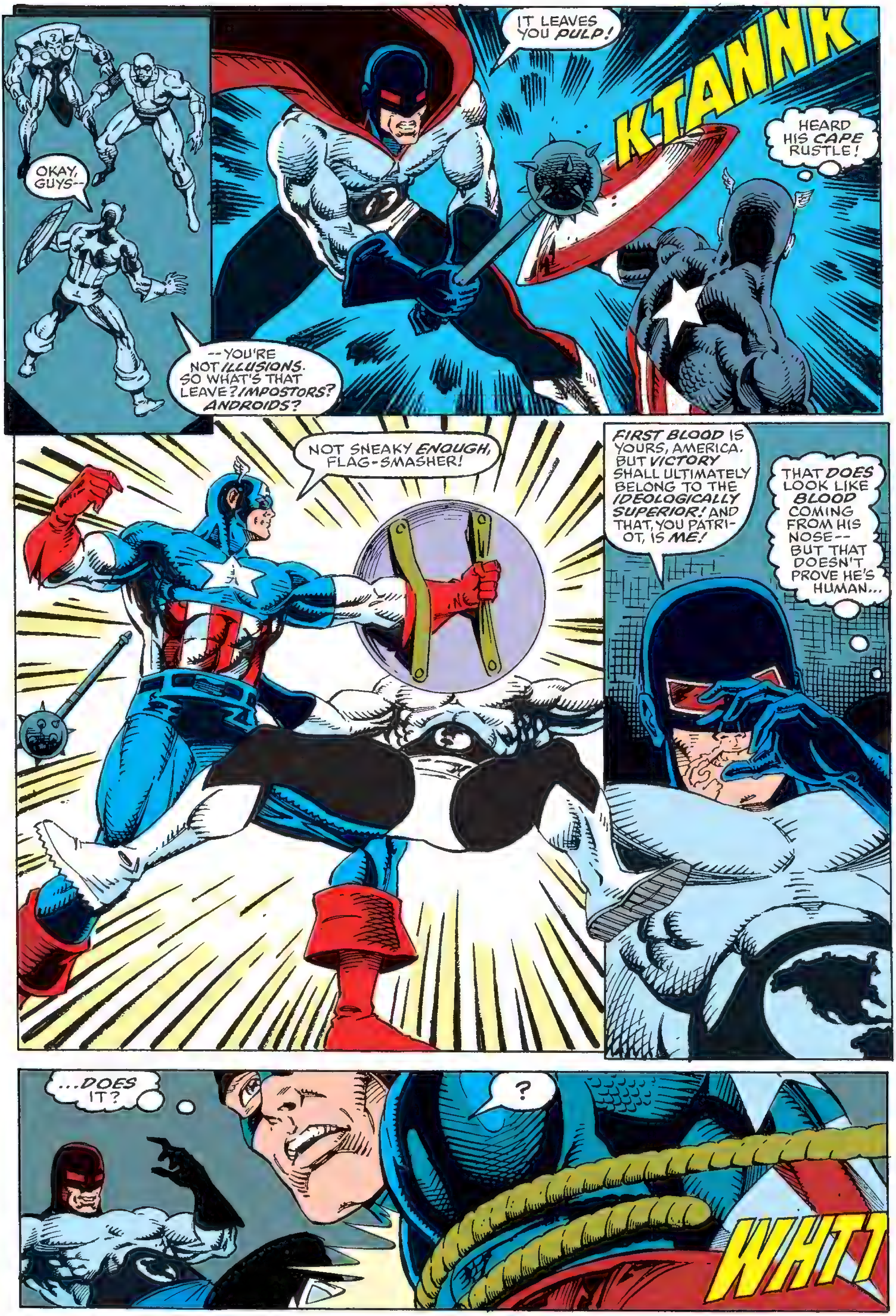

MEANWHILE, 23,000 MILES ABOVE HALA...
NO ONE'S *SAID* ANYTHING SINCE LIFTOFF....
...GUESS WE ALL FEEL *BAD* ABOUT HAVING TO LEAVE CAP BEHIND.
IRON MAN PROBABLY FEELS THE *WORST.* HE'S THE ONE WHO MADE THE DECISION TO *TAKE OFF.*
HE'S ALSO THE ONE WHO KNOCKED *CLINT* OUT WHEN HE REFUSED TO *DITCH CAP.*
CLICK
HOW *FARES* HE, *CRYSTAL?*
STILL BREATHING, *HERCULES.*
JUST HOW HARD DID YOU *HIT* HIM, IRON MAN?*
I USED WHAT I FELT WAS APPROPRIATE FORCE.
* SEE IRON MAN #279.--IRON MAC
SO THAT'S *IT?* WE WRITE CAP OFF *FOR GOOD?*
I'LL CONTACT *QUASAR* AS SOON AS I CAN, HAVE HIM COME BACK AND *RETRIEVE* HIM.
OUR PRIORITY IS TO LOCATE THAT *NEGA-BOMB* DEATHBIRD TOLD ABOUT, AND PREVENT FROM *DETONATING.*
THAT WAY WE SAVE *CAP* AS WELL AS EVERY *OTHER* MOTHER-LOVING KREE IN THE GALAXY.

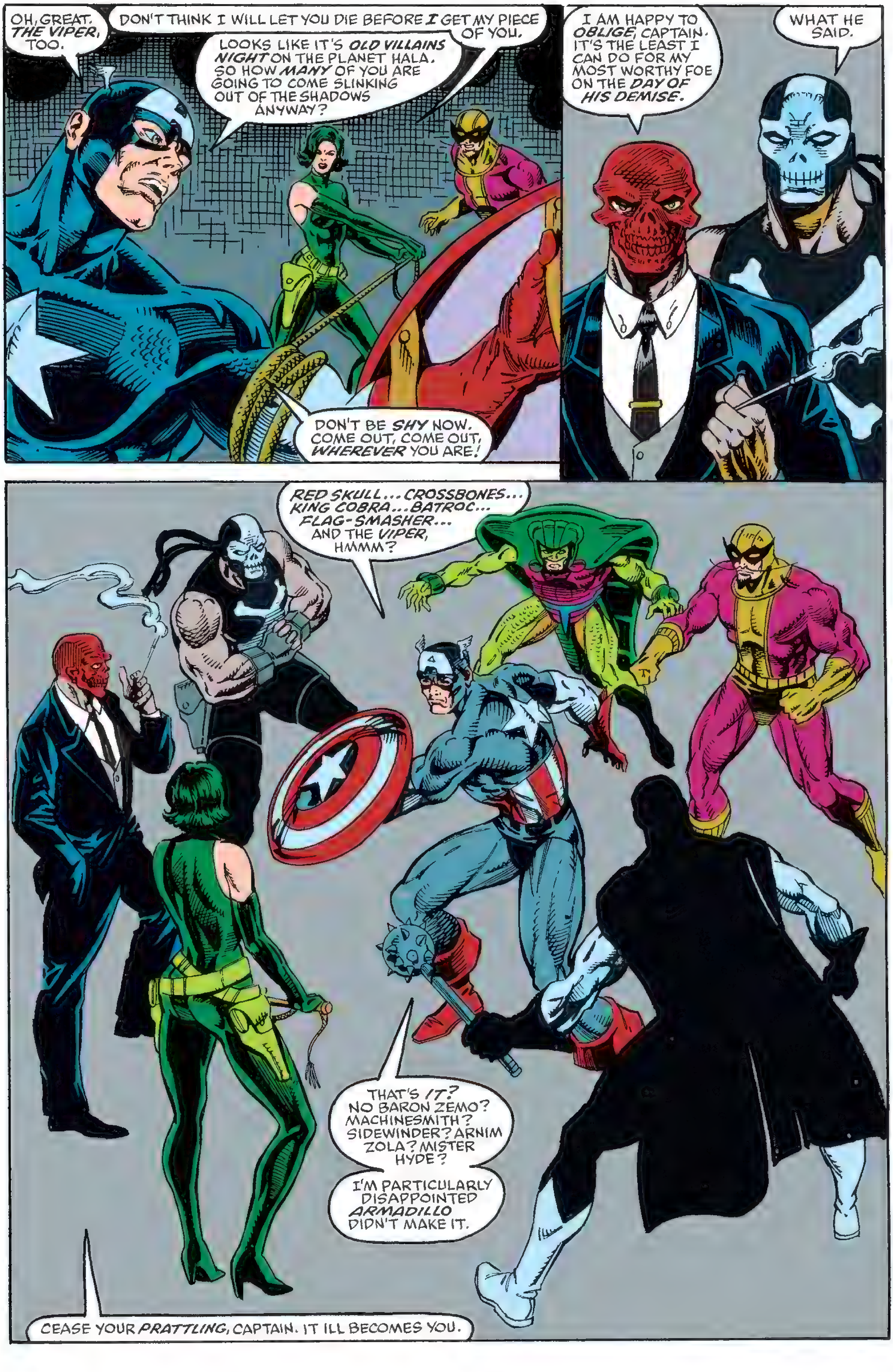

AND WHAT IF WE *FAIL?* *OUTER SPACE* IS ONE HECKUVA *BIG PLACE* AND IF WE DON'T HAPPEN TO CATCH THE BOMB AT THE STARGATE, THEN HOW--
CAP WAS GETTING OUT OF *TIGHT SCRAPES* BEFORE YOU WERE EVEN *BORN*. HE'LL *MANAGE*. I'D BE WILLING TO BET *TONY STARK'S FORTUNE* ON IT.
NNNNH... WHA' HOPPEN...? WHERE-- *HEY!*
AM I JUST *WHISTLING* IN THE DARK? *CAN* CAP SURVIVE EVERYTHING THE KREE MAY THROW AT HIM? WILL THE BLOOD OF ONE OF THE *GREATEST HEROES* THE HUMAN RACE'S EVER BROUGHT FORTH BE ON MY *CONSCIENCE...?*
ELSEWHERE...
WHERE *AM* I, TO COIN A CLICHE'?
WHEN I PASSED OUT, I WAS BURIED BENEATH A *PILE OF RUBBLE...*
TWO KREE *POLICEMEN*-- THE SO-CALLED *ACCUSERS*-- LED ME FROM WHERE THE *OTHER* AVENGERS WERE INCARCERATED...
MIND'S HAZY. WHAT HAPPENED? THERE WAS THE *EXPLOSION*.
AND BEFORE *THAT...?*


"...INTO THE CHAMBER OF THE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE*, NEWLY-REINSTATED HEAD OF THE THOUSAND WORLD KREE EMPIRE. ON BOTH SIDES OF THE CHAMBER WERE *BODIES* IN TUBES-- THE DEAD KREE WHOSE *MINDS* HE ABSORBED PERHAPS?
YOU WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE, I *SALUTE* YOU! FOR ONLY WHEN YOU ARE *DEAD* CAN I--
"HE ADDRESSED ME... IN *ENGLISH*. HIS *VOICE*-- RANG IN MY HEAD LIKE A CHORUS OF A *THOUSAND METAL HORNETS*. WHAT *WAS* IT HE SAID...?
"HE NEVER FINISHED THE *SENTENCE*. THE NEXT MOMENT THERE WAS A BIG BOOM--
--AND THE WALL OF BODIES *BLEW IN* FROM BOTH SIDES. I JUST CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THE *CEILING* BUCKLING BEFORE THE SHOCK WAVE CAUGHT ME...
...AND NOW *THIS*. SO DIM... I CAN'T *SEE* MY HAND IN FRONT OF MY FACE.
GOT YOU!
BUT TO JUDGE BY THE SOUND MY *FOOT* MAKES WHEN I STAMP, I'M IN A *LARGE, EMPTY CHAMBER*...!
WHOA-- *WHAT*--?

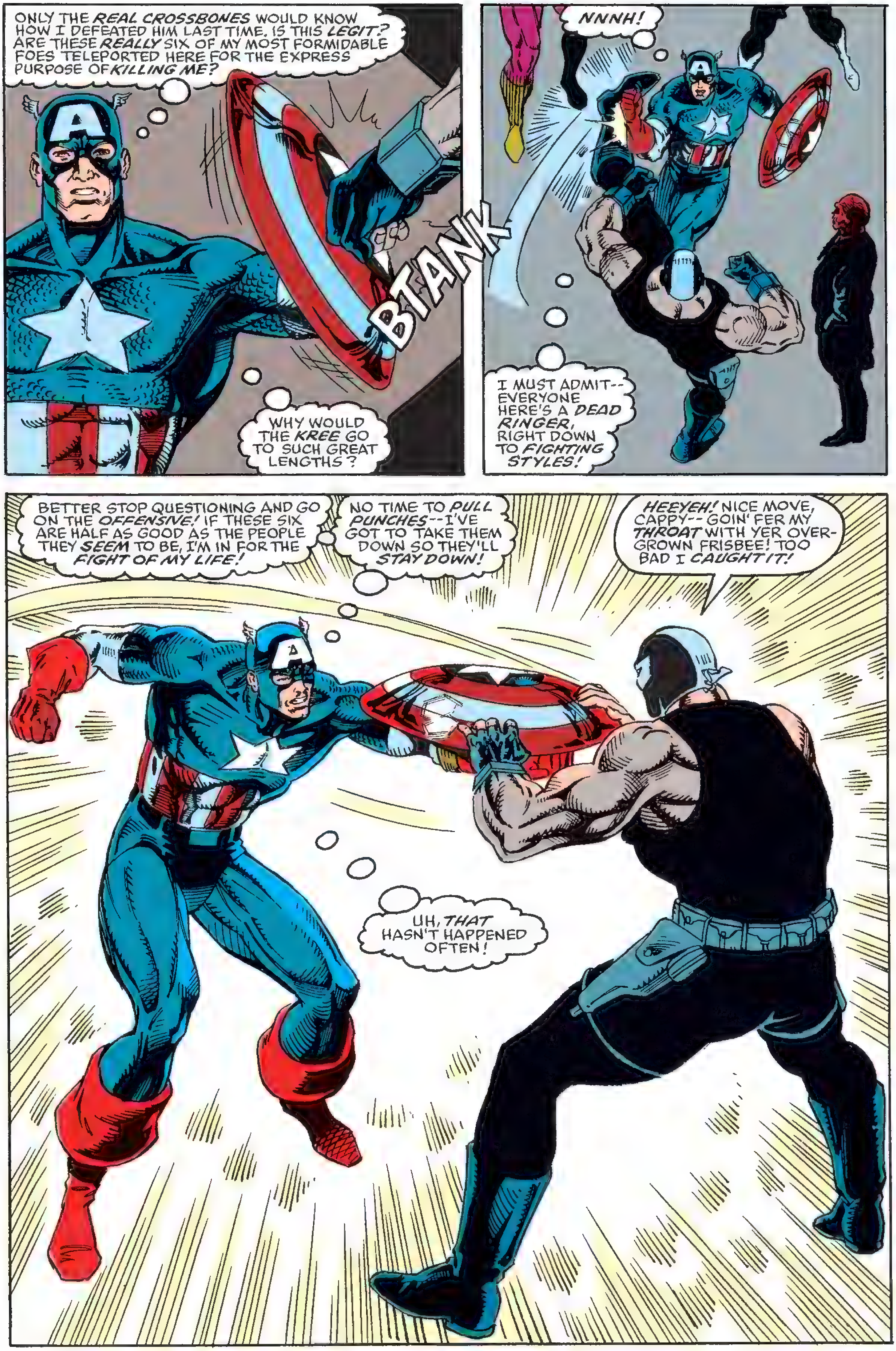

NOW YOU'RE GOING TO *PAY!*
THAT VOICE...!
COBRA--?
THAT'S *KING COBRA,* YOU INSIPID AVENGER!
YOU CAN'T BE--*NNNGH!*--HERE!
I'M ON AN--*NNNGH!*--*ALIEN WORLD!*
SVAASH
WHOEVER THIS IS, HE'S GOT A GRIP LIKE THE *REAL* COBRA--AND HE KEEPS PUMMELING ME WITH HIS *STEELY TAIL!*
I DON'T CARE *WHERE* WE ARE OR HOW I *GOT* HERE, CAPTAIN--I'M JUST GRATEFUL TO BE *OUT OF PRISON* AND TO HAVE ANOTHER *CHANCE* AT YOU!
YOU RUINED *EVERYTHING* BY BRINGING DOWN THE *SERPENT SOCIETY* LIKE YOU DID--YOU MADE ME A *LAUGHINGSTOCK* AMONG MY PEERS!
HE'LL BREAK A *RIB* IF I DON'T--*NGGGK!*

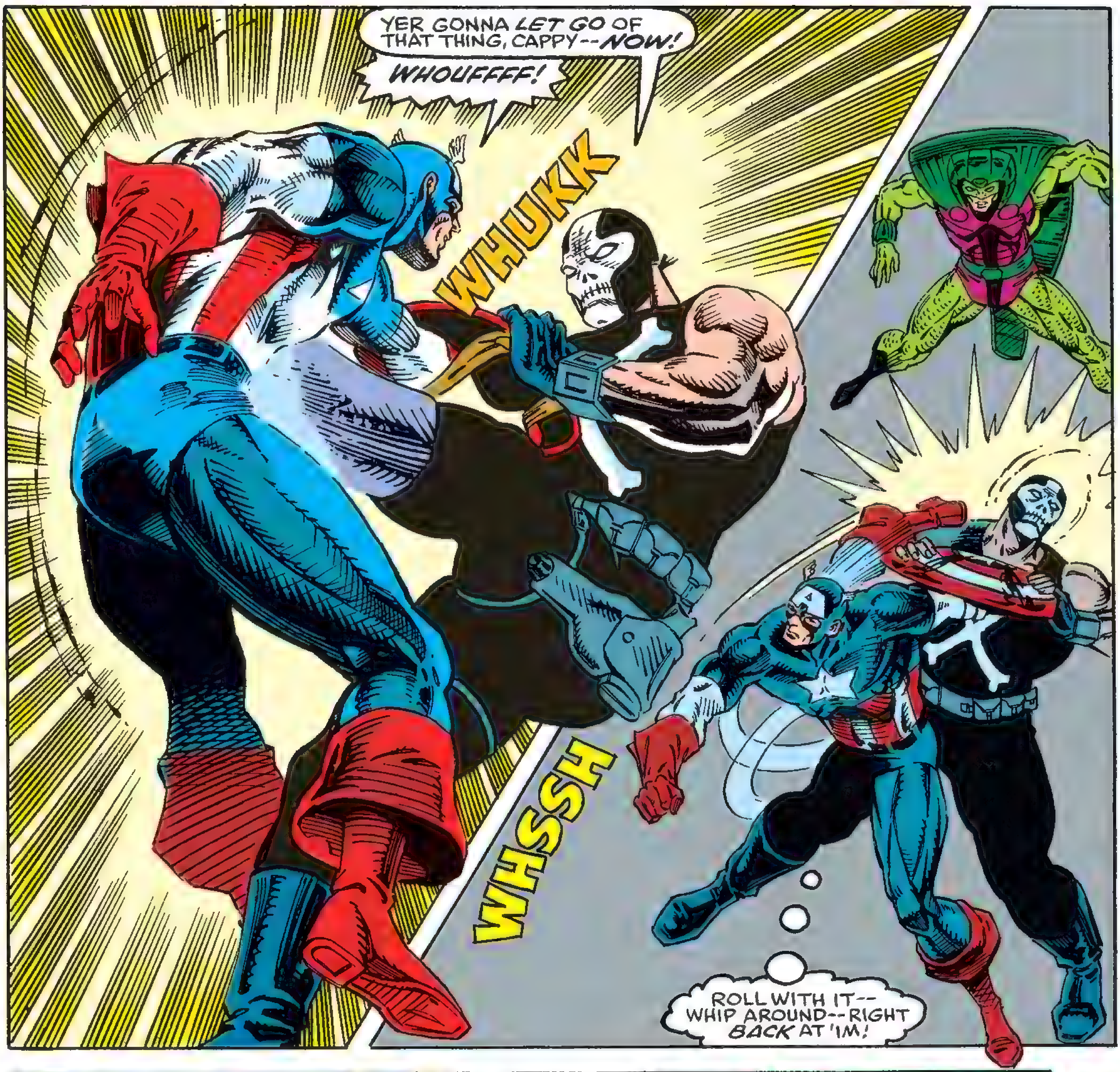

BON JOUR, MON AMI!
BATROC--?!? AW, COME ON, NOW I KNOW I'M HALLUCINATING!
EEF I AM JUST AN ILLUSION, ZEN YOU WILL NOT MIND WHEN I LAND ATOP YOUR RIB CAGE!
PLANT MY FOOT-- TWIST--!
NGAAAH!
THANKS, BAT!

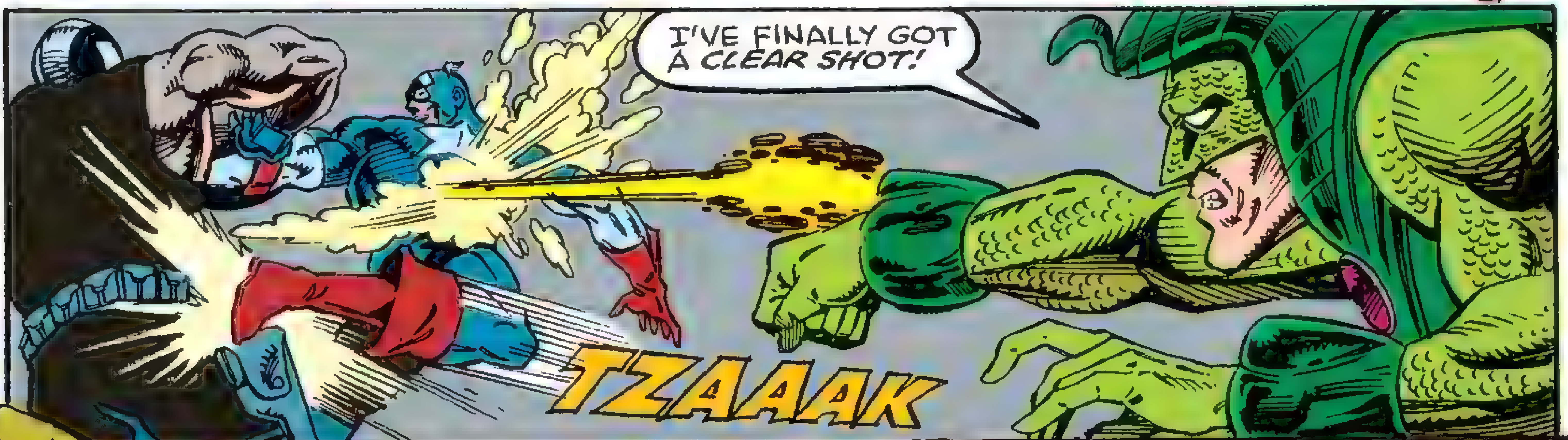

OKAY, GUYS--
--YOU'RE NOT *ILLUSIONS.* SO WHAT'S THAT LEAVE? *IMPOSTORS? ANDROIDS?*
IT LEAVES YOU *PULP!*
KTANNK
HEARD HIS *CAPE* RUSTLE!
NOT SNEAKY *ENOUGH,* FLAG-SMASHER!
FIRST BLOOD IS YOURS, AMERICA. BUT *VICTORY* SHALL ULTIMATELY BELONG TO THE *IDEOLOGICALLY SUPERIOR!* AND THAT, YOU PATRIOT, IS *ME!*
THAT *DOES* LOOK LIKE *BLOOD* COMING FROM HIS NOSE-- BUT THAT DOESN'T PROVE HE'S HUMAN...
...*DOES* IT?
?
WHT!

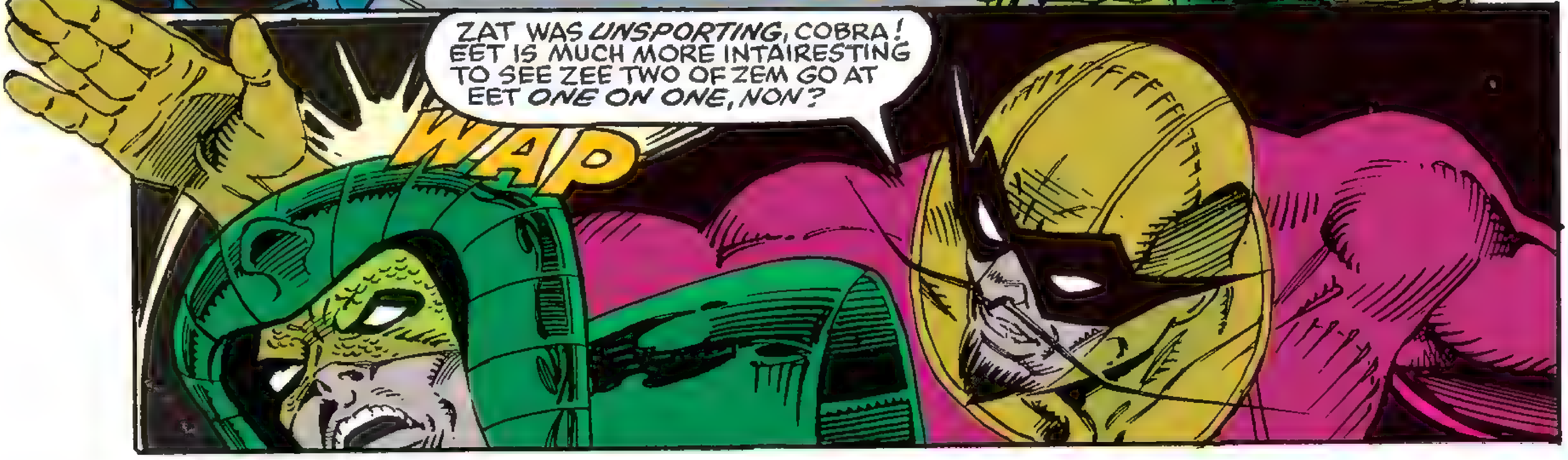

OH, GREAT. *THE VIPER*, TOO.
DON'T THINK *I* WILL LET YOU DIE BEFORE *I* GET MY PIECE OF YOU.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S *OLD VILLAINS NIGHT* ON THE PLANET HALA. SO HOW *MANY* OF YOU ARE GOING TO COME SLINKING OUT OF THE SHADOWS ANYWAY?
DON'T BE *SHY* NOW. COME OUT, COME OUT, *WHEREVER* YOU ARE!
I AM HAPPY TO *OBLIGE*, CAPTAIN. IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO FOR MY MOST WORTHY FOE ON THE *DAY OF HIS DEMISE*.
WHAT HE SAID.
RED SKULL... CROSSBONES... KING COBRA... BATROC... FLAG-SMASHER... AND THE *VIPER*, HMMM?
THAT'S *IT?* NO BARON ZEMO? MACHINESMITH? SIDEWINDER? ARNIM ZOLA? MISTER HYDE?
I'M PARTICULARLY DISAPPOINTED *ARMADILLO* DIDN'T MAKE IT.
CEASE YOUR *PRATTLING*, CAPTAIN. IT ILL BECOMES YOU.

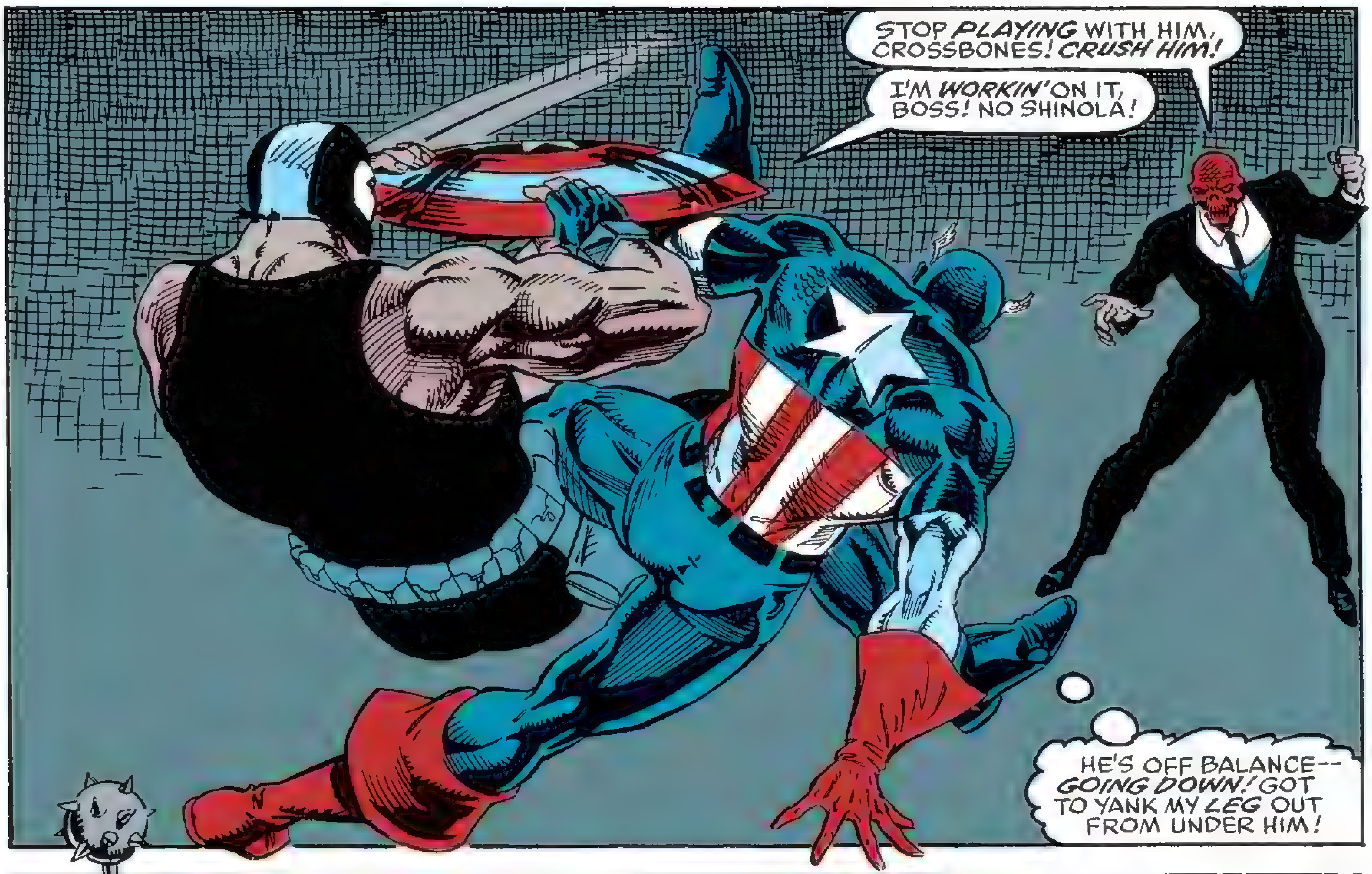
SO WHAT'S ON THE *PROGRAM*? WE ALL *FIGHT*, SIX AGAINST ONE?
SOUNDS RIGHT TO *ME!*
NO. FIRST WE *TALK*. IT IS BECAUSE OF *YOU* WE ARE HERE, CAPTAIN. INCONVENIENTLY WRENCHED AWAY FROM OUR AFFAIRS ON *EARTH*.
OUR *ALIEN ABDUCTORS* TELL US THAT WE MUST *KILL YOU* BEFORE WE WILL BE PERMITTED TO RETURN.
I *DISLIKE* BEING ORDERED ABOUT. WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THESE... *KREE?*
THEY BRUSH AFTER EVERY *MEAL*.
YOU... *MOCK*... ME.
SNAP
KILL HIM.
PANSIES. I'LL DO THIS *MYSELF!*
YO, BIG A. 'MEMBER *THESE?*
YOU MANAGED TO GET OVER ON ME LAST TIME WE WENT AT IT BY YANKIN' MY *MASK ASKEW*.
WELL, SWEETUMS, I JUS' WANT YA TA KNOW YOU *AIN'T* GONNA BE ABLE TA PULL THE WOOL OVER MY EYES *TWICE*. PIG?
RIIIP

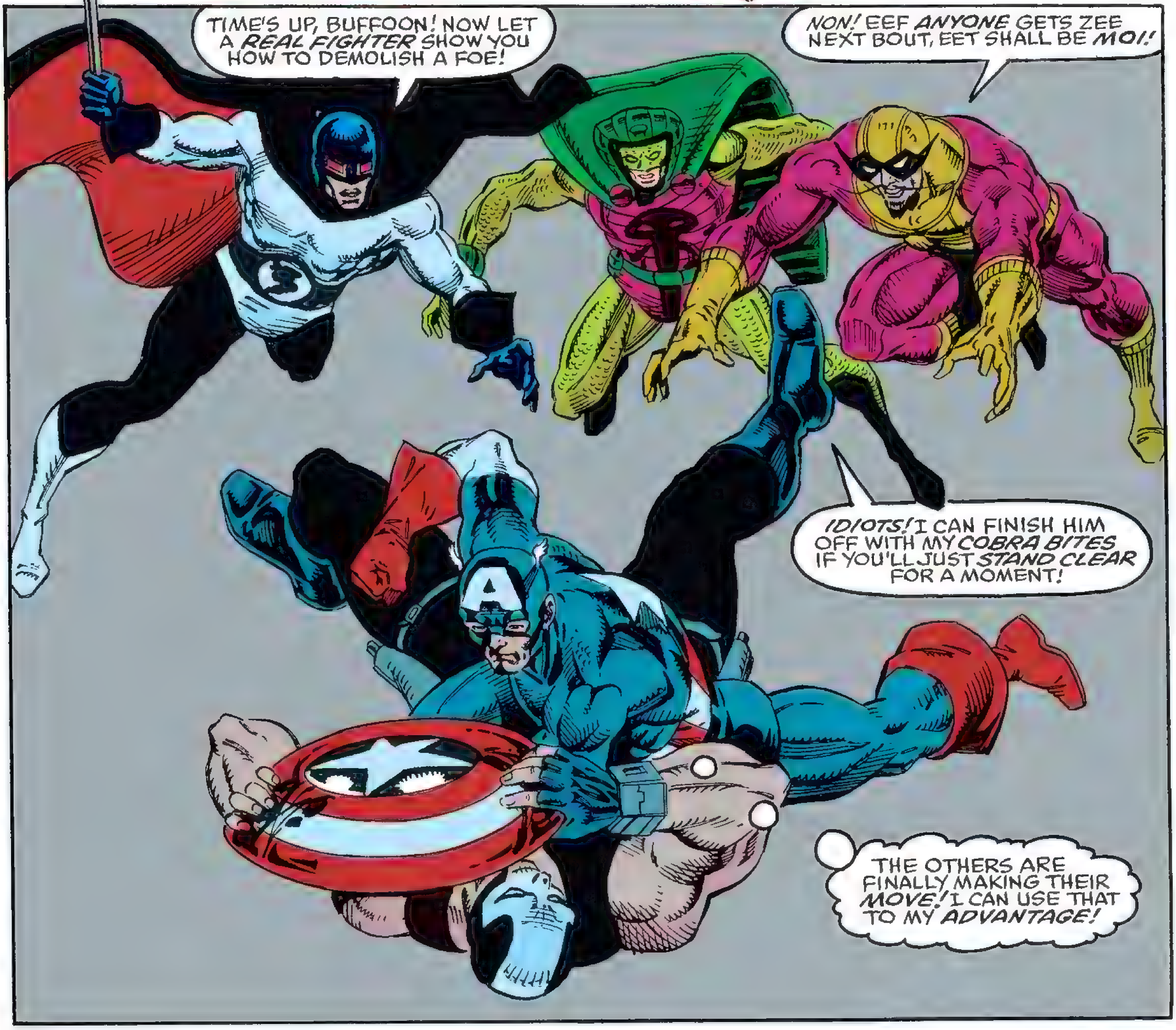

ONLY THE *REAL CROSSBONES* WOULD KNOW HOW I DEFEATED HIM LAST TIME. IS THIS *LEGIT?* ARE THESE *REALLY* SIX OF MY MOST FORMIDABLE FOES TELEPORTED HERE FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF *KILLING ME?*
BTANK
WHY WOULD THE *KREE* GO TO SUCH GREAT LENGTHS?
NNNH!
I MUST ADMIT-- EVERYONE HERE'S A *DEAD RINGER,* RIGHT DOWN TO *FIGHTING STYLES!*
BETTER STOP QUESTIONING AND GO ON THE *OFFENSIVE!* IF THESE SIX ARE HALF AS GOOD AS THE PEOPLE THEY *SEEM* TO BE, I'M IN FOR THE *FIGHT OF MY LIFE!*
NO TIME TO *PULL PUNCHES*--I'VE GOT TO TAKE THEM DOWN SO THEY'LL *STAY DOWN!*
HEEYEH! NICE MOVE, CAPPY-- GOIN' FER MY *THROAT* WITH YER OVERGROWN FRISBEE! TOO BAD I *CAUGHT IT!*
UH, *THAT* HASN'T HAPPENED OFTEN!

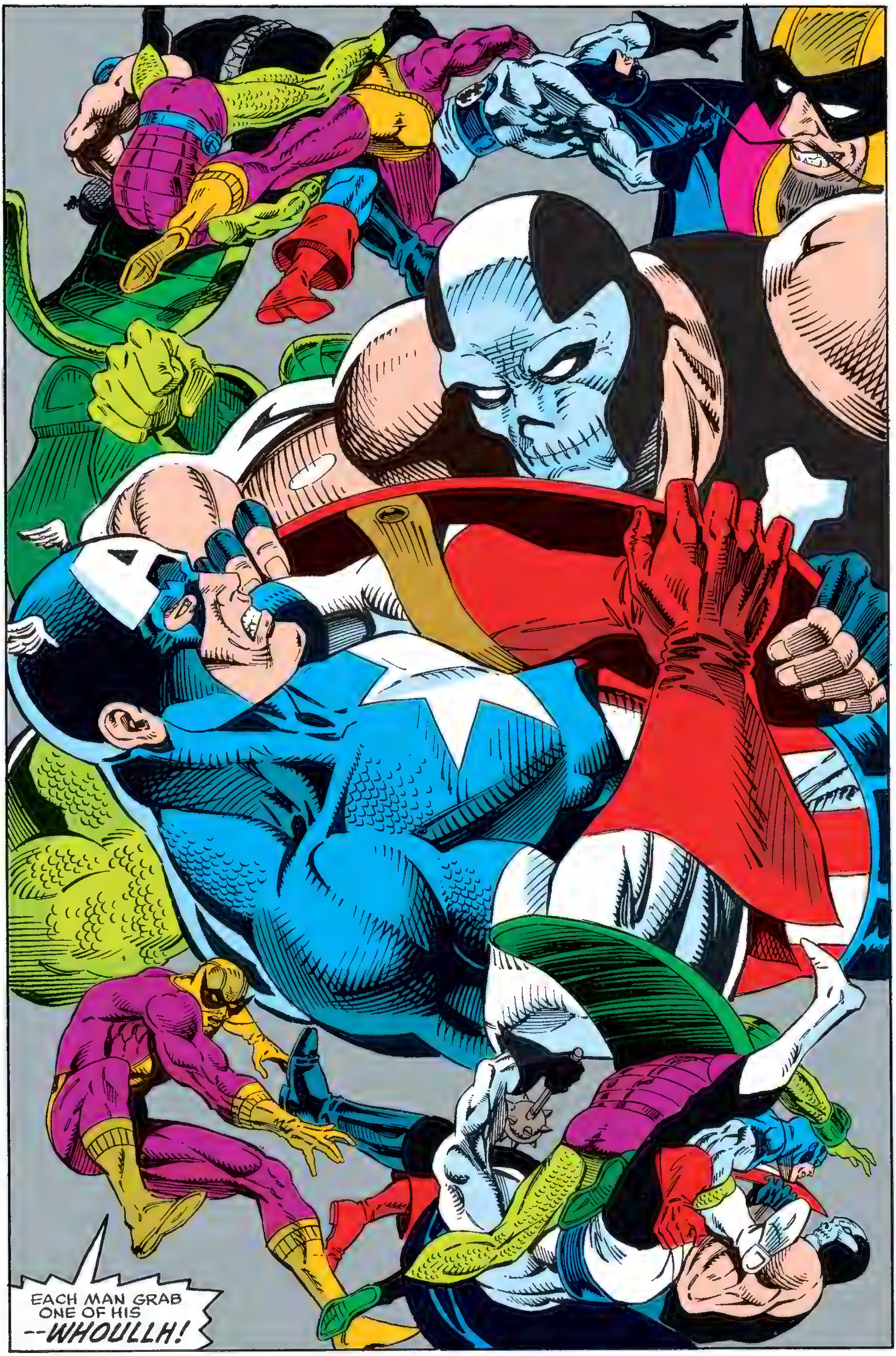

YER GONNA *LET GO* OF THAT THING, CAPPY--*NOW!*
WHOUFFFF!
WHUKK
WHSSH
ROLL WITH IT-- WHIP AROUND--RIGHT *BACK* AT 'IM!

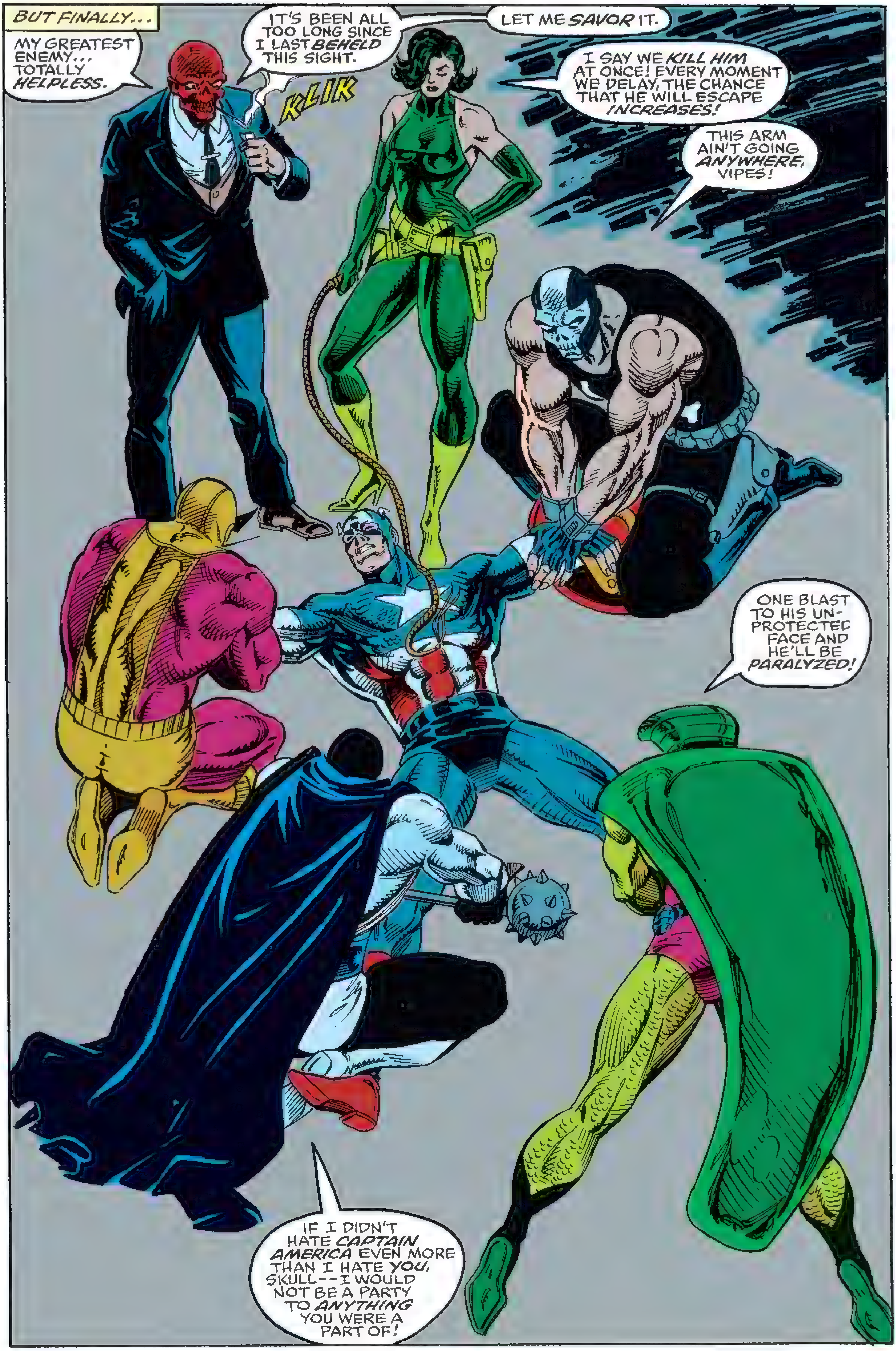

I'VE FINALLY GOT A *CLEAR SHOT!*
TZAAAK

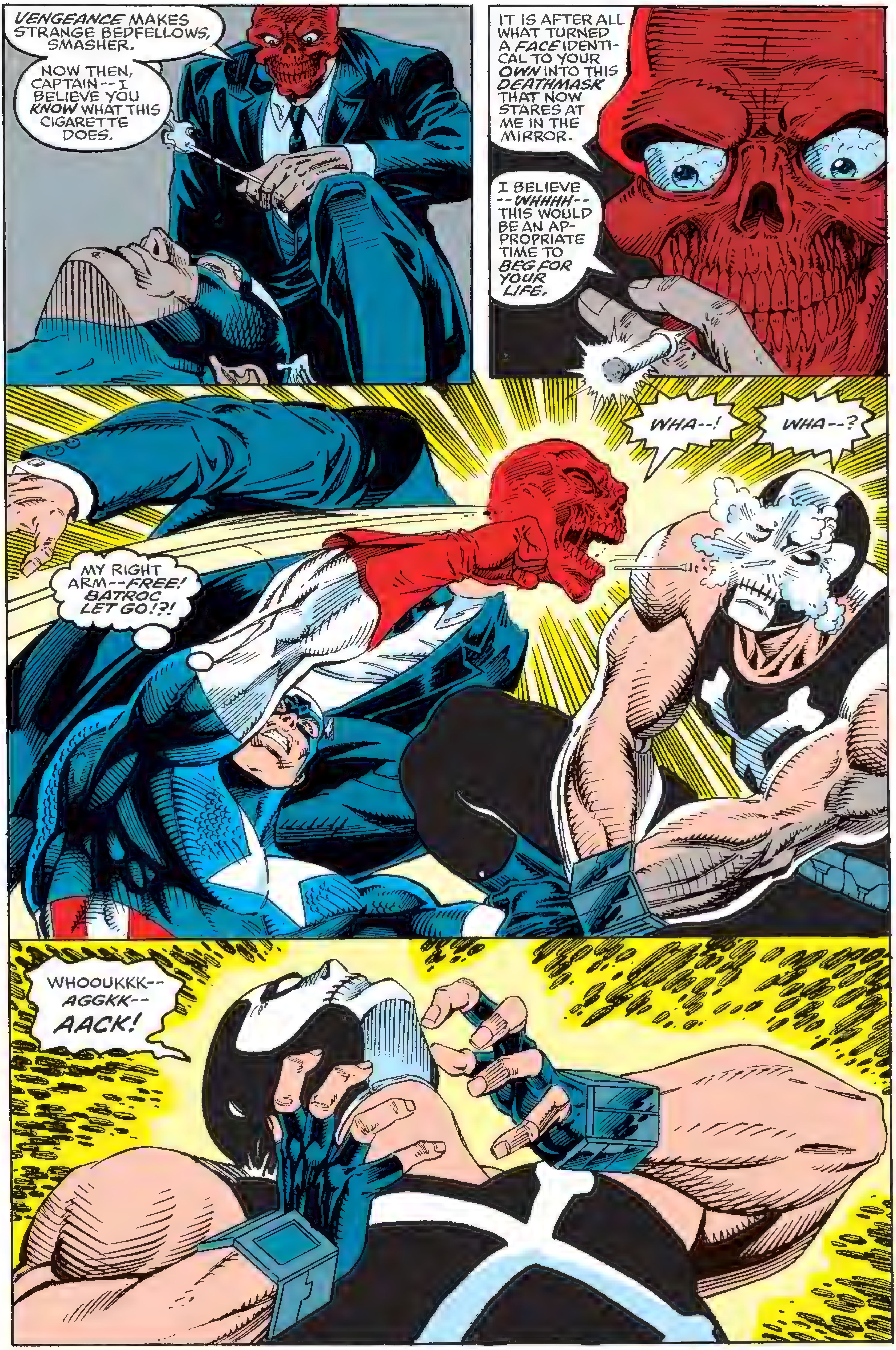

ZAT WAS *UNSPORTING*, COBRA! EET IS MUCH MORE INTAIRESTING TO SEE ZEE TWO OF ZEM GO AT EET *ONE ON ONE, NON?*
WAP


STOP *PLAYING* WITH HIM, CROSSBONES! *CRUSH HIM!*
I'M *WORKIN'* ON IT, BOSS! NO SHINOLA!
HE'S OFF BALANCE-- *GOING DOWN!* GOT TO YANK MY *LEG* OUT FROM UNDER HIM!

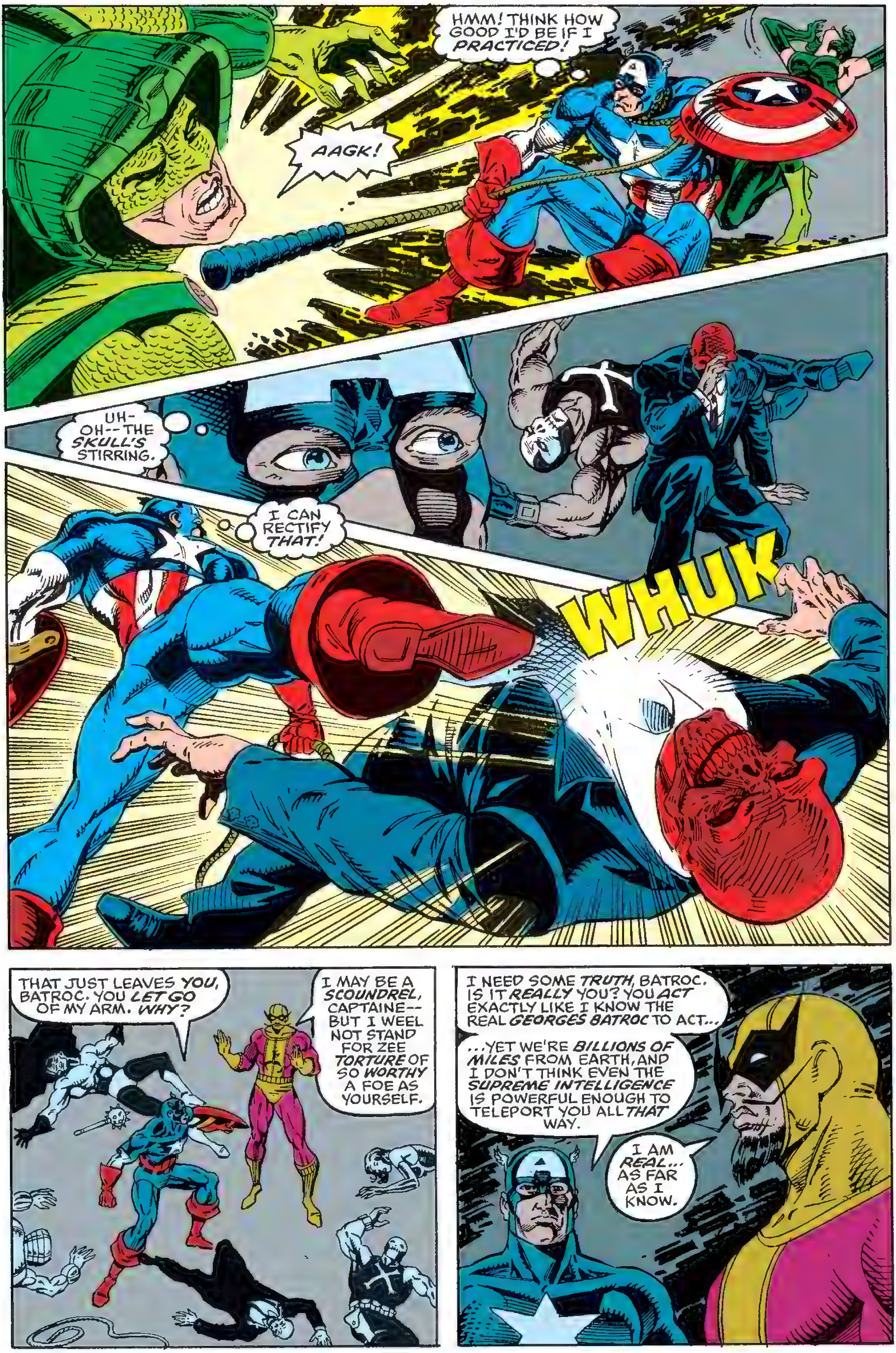

TIME'S UP, BUFFOON! NOW LET A *REAL FIGHTER* SHOW YOU HOW TO DEMOLISH A FOE!
NON! EEF *ANYONE* GETS ZEE NEXT BOUT, EET SHALL BE *MOI!*
IDIOTS! I CAN FINISH HIM OFF WITH MY *COBRA BITES* IF YOU'LL JUST *STAND CLEAR* FOR A MOMENT!
THE OTHERS ARE FINALLY MAKING THEIR *MOVE!* I CAN USE THAT TO MY *ADVANTAGE!*

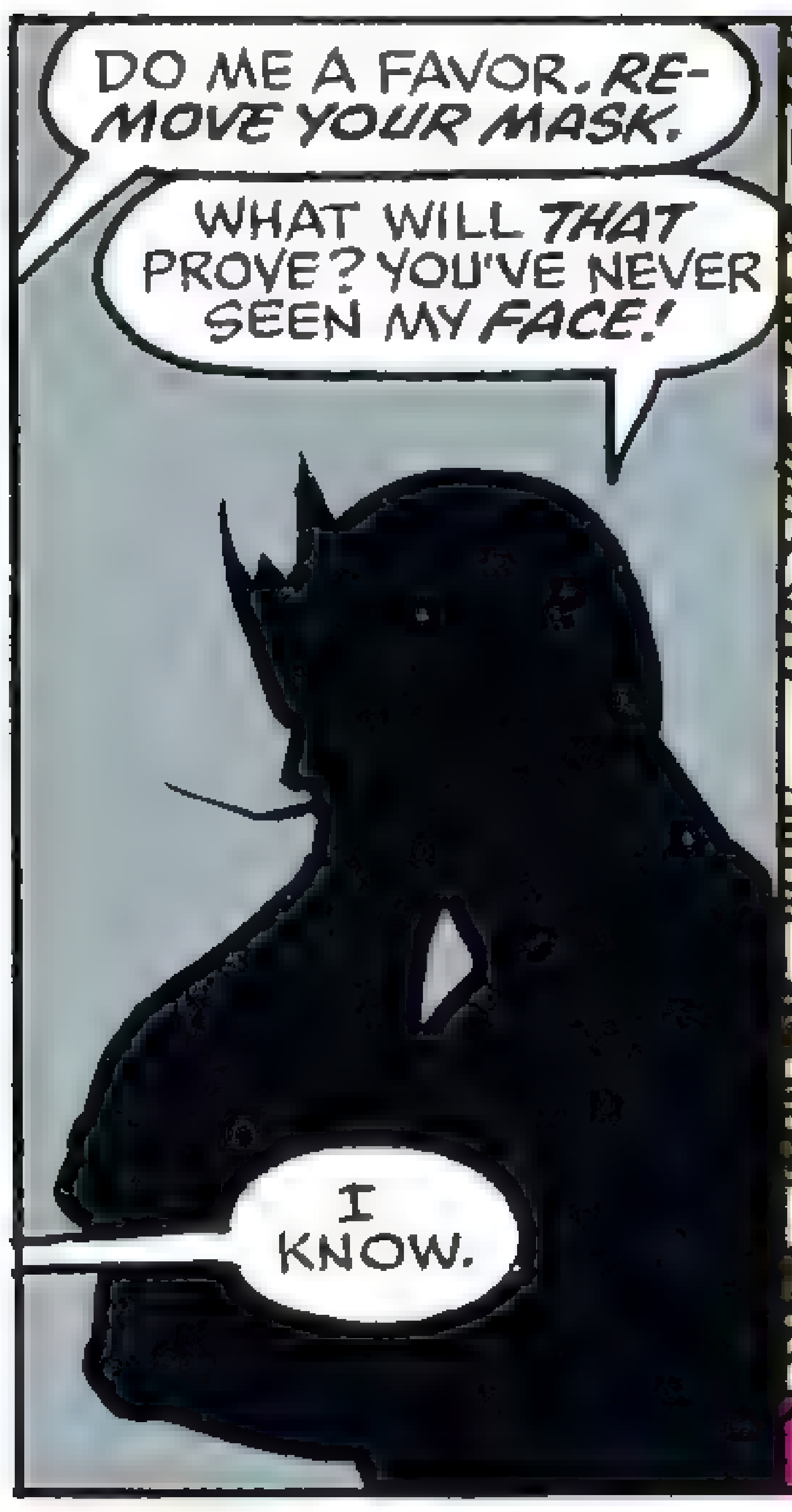

EACH MAN GRAB ONE OF HIS --WHOULLH!

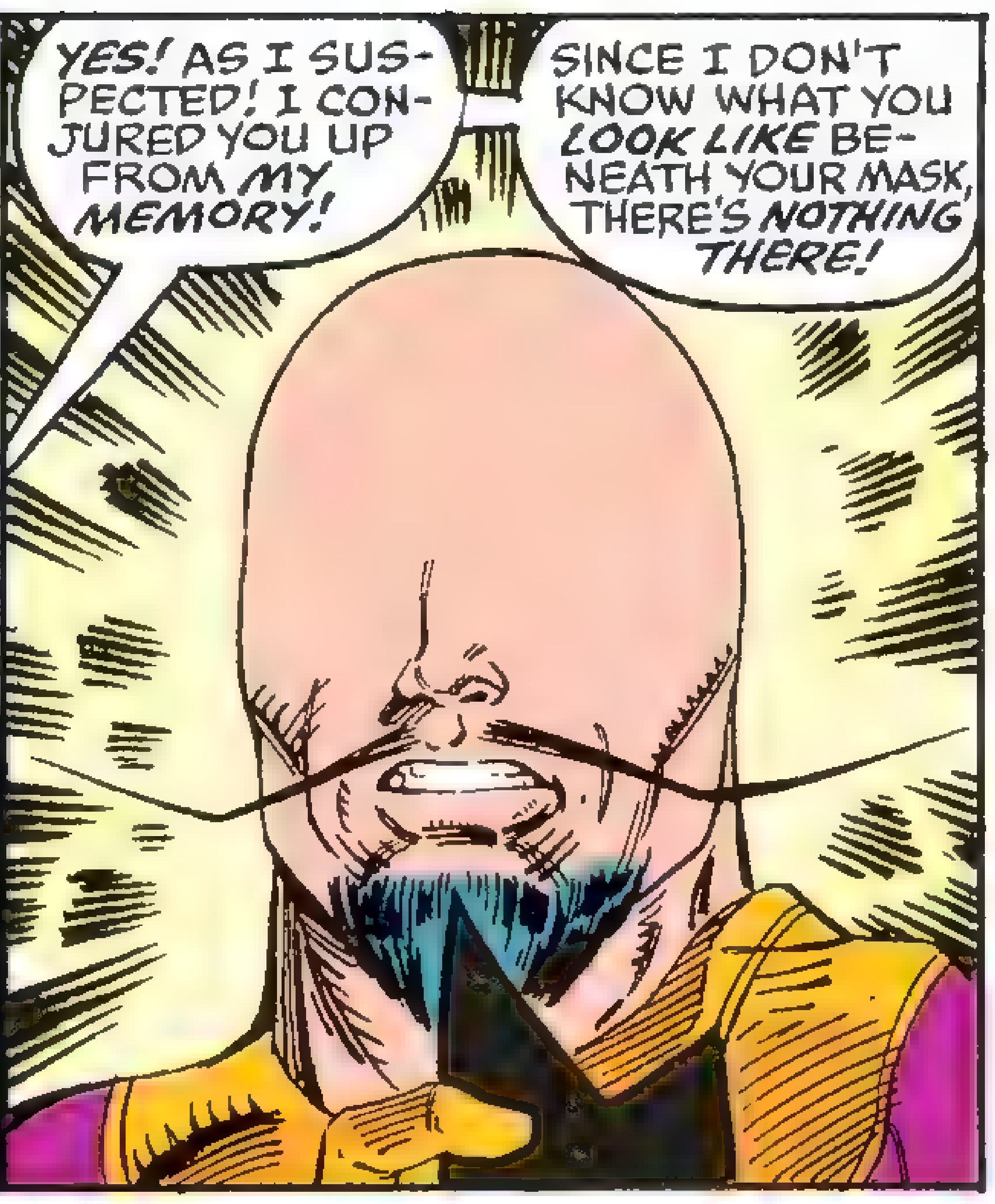

BUT FINALLY...
MY GREATEST ENEMY... TOTALLY HELPLESS.
IT'S BEEN ALL TOO LONG SINCE I LAST BEHELD THIS SIGHT.
LET ME SAVOR IT.
K-LIK
I SAY WE KILL HIM AT ONCE! EVERY MOMENT WE DELAY, THE CHANCE THAT HE WILL ESCAPE INCREASES!
THIS ARM AIN'T GOING ANYWHERE, VIPES!
ONE BLAST TO HIS UNPROTECTED FACE AND HE'LL BE PARALYZED!
IF I DIDN'T HATE CAPTAIN AMERICA EVEN MORE THAN I HATE YOU, SKULL--I WOULD NOT BE A PARTY TO ANYTHING YOU WERE A PART OF!

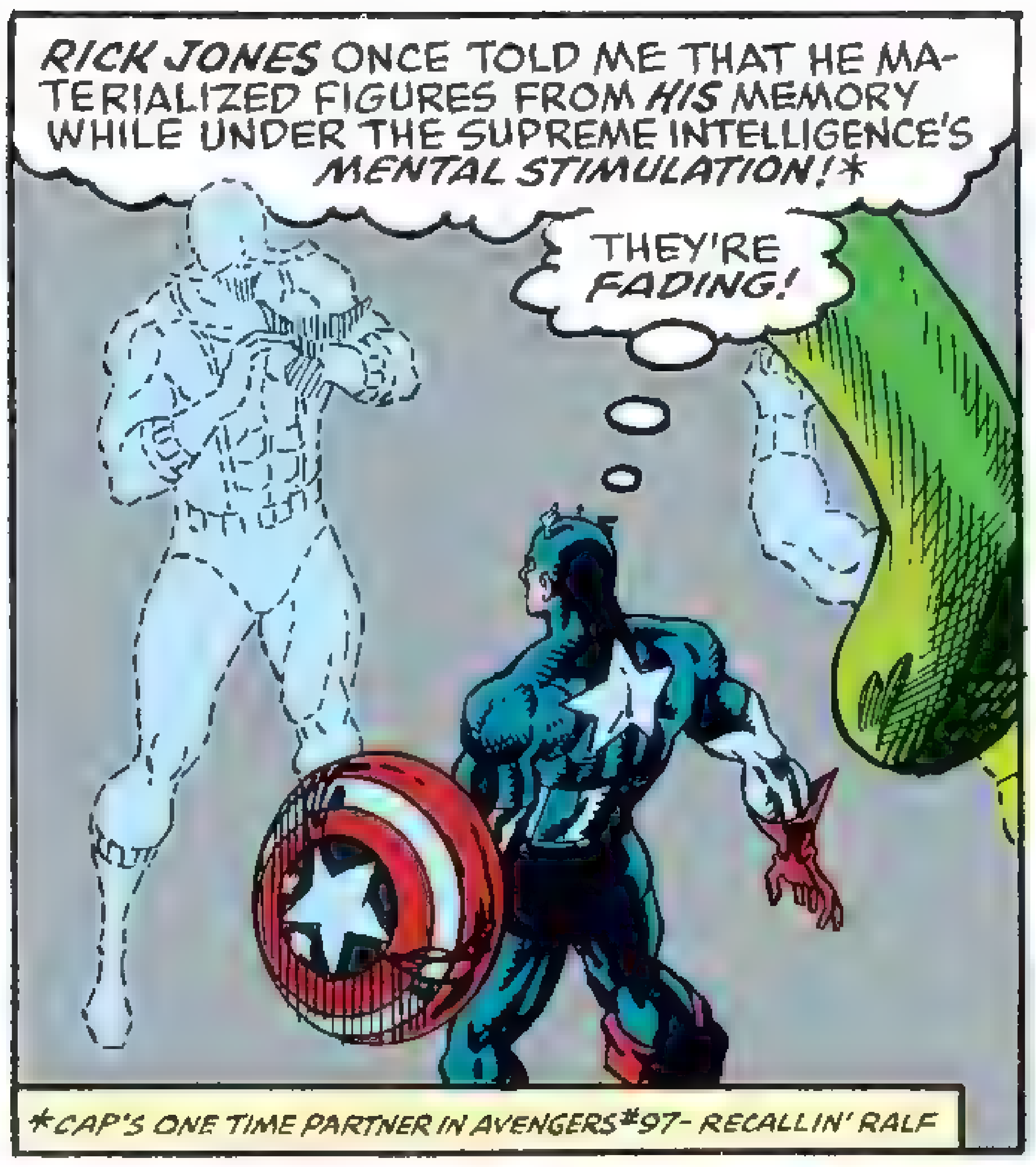

VENGEANCE MAKES STRANGE BEDFELLOWS, SMASHER.
NOW THEN, CAPTAIN -- I BELIEVE YOU KNOW WHAT THIS CIGARETTE DOES.
IT IS AFTER ALL WHAT TURNED A FACE IDENTICAL TO YOUR OWN INTO THIS DEATHMASK THAT NOW STARES AT ME IN THE MIRROR.
I BELIEVE -- WHHHH -- THIS WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO BEG FOR YOUR LIFE.
WHA--!
WHA--?
MY RIGHT ARM--FREE! BATROC LET GO!?!
WHOOUKKK-- AGGKK-- AACK!

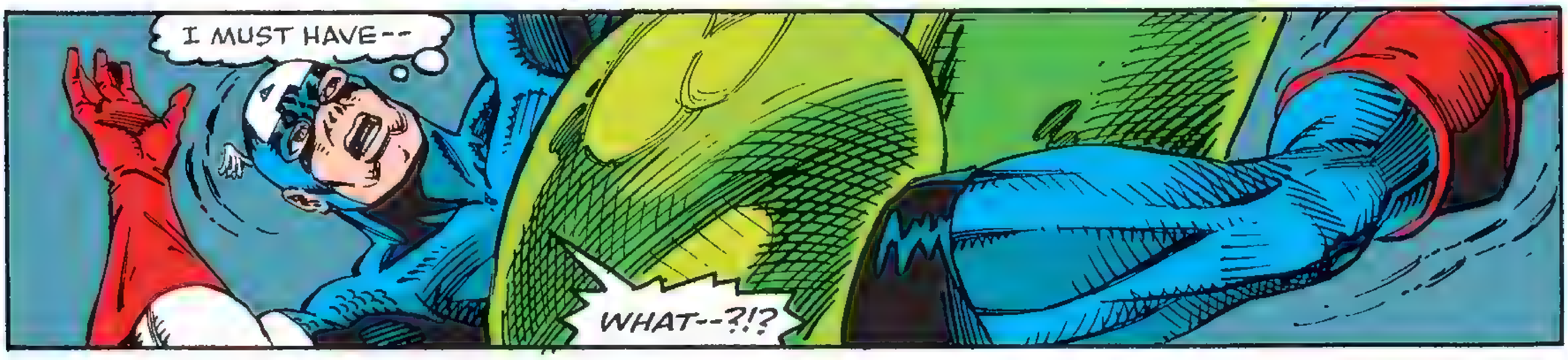
WHAMP
CROSS HAS FINALLY LET GO OF MY *SHIELD!*
FLAG-- YOU'RE *IT!*
ONCE I DOWN THEM ALL--*THEN WHAT?*
WHUUUL!
UNLESS I *DISABLE* THEM, THEY'RE GOING TO *KEEP COMING AFTER--*
AHHHHK!
THE *VIPER'S WHIP!* AND COBRA'S GOT ME IN HIS *SIGHTS!*
VZAAAOOM
OHH!
WHIP WENT *SLACK!*

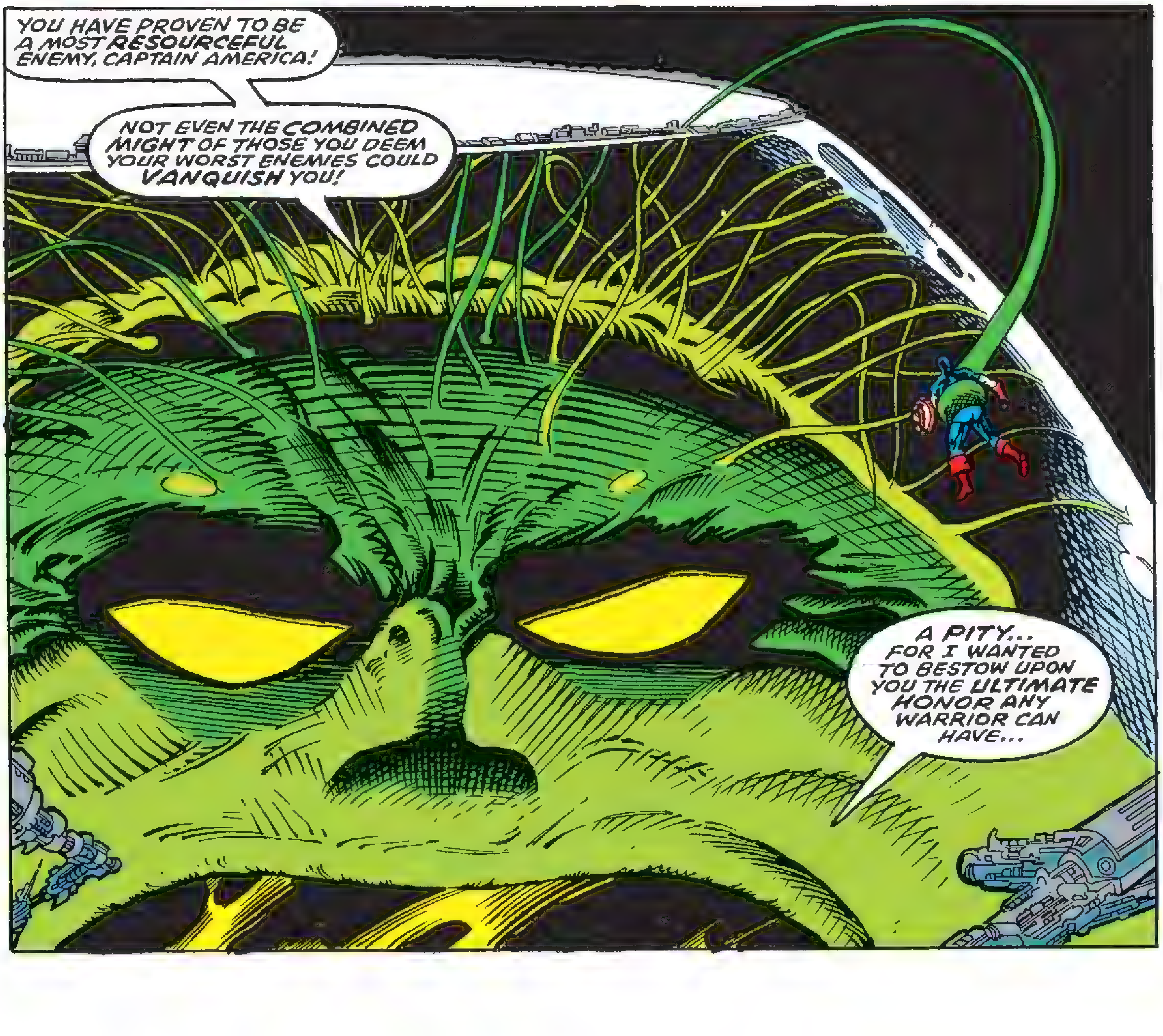

AAGK!
HMM! THINK HOW GOOD I'D BE IF I *PRACTICED!*
UH-OH--THE *SKULL'S* STIRRING.
I CAN RECTIFY *THAT!*
WHUK
THAT JUST LEAVES *YOU,* BATROC. YOU *LET GO* OF MY ARM. *WHY?*
I MAY BE A *SCOUNDREL,* CAPTAINE--BUT I WEEL NOT STAND FOR ZEE *TORTURE* OF SO *WORTHY* A FOE AS YOURSELF.
I NEED SOME *TRUTH,* BATROC. IS IT *REALLY* YOU? YOU *ACT* EXACTLY LIKE I KNOW THE REAL *GEORGES BATROC* TO ACT...
...YET WE'RE *BILLIONS OF MILES* FROM EARTH, AND I DON'T THINK EVEN THE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE* IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TELEPORT YOU ALL *THAT* WAY.
I AM *REAL...* AS FAR AS I KNOW.

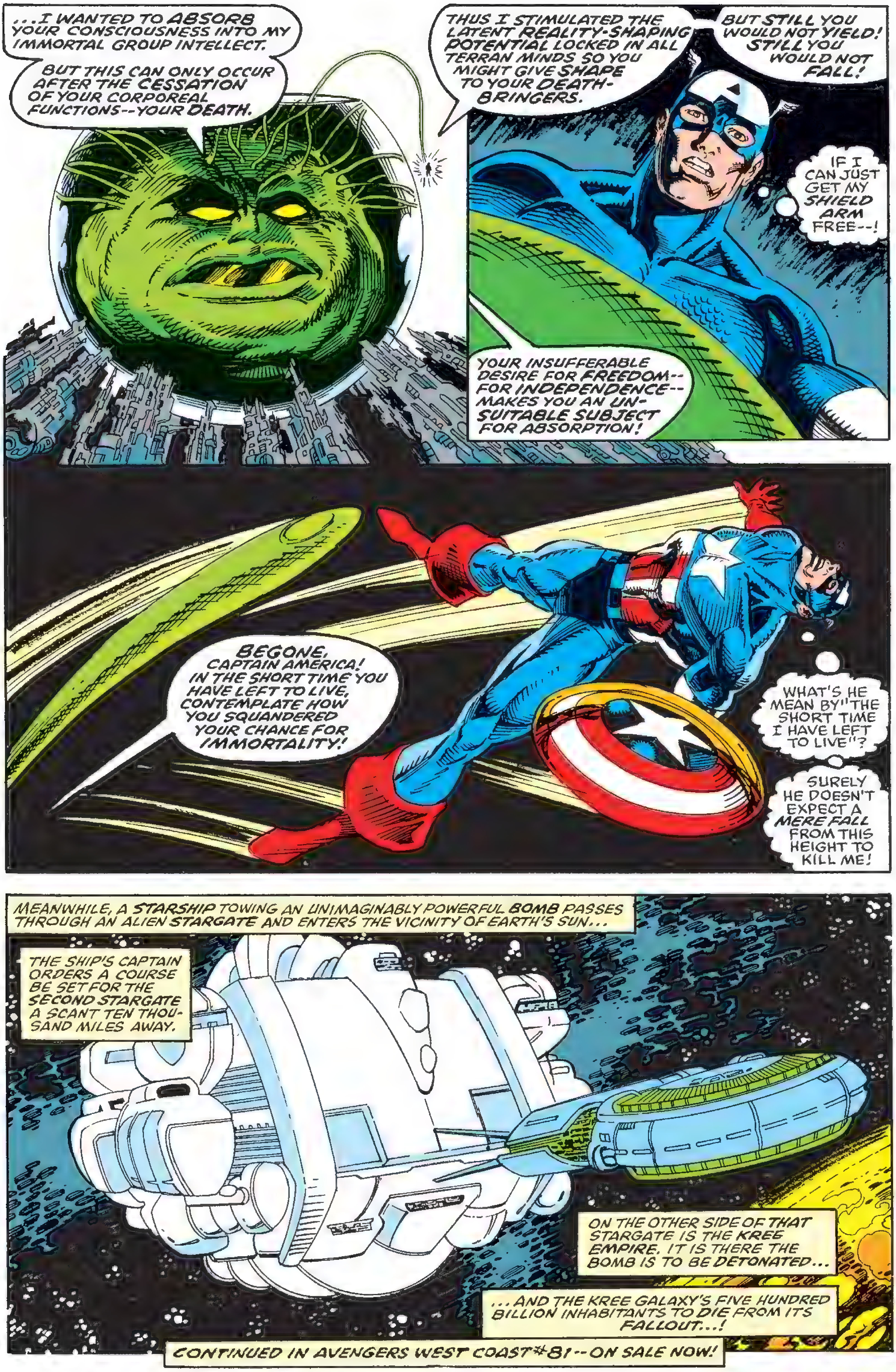

DO ME A FAVOR. REMOVE YOUR MASK.
WHAT WILL THAT PROVE? YOU'VE NEVER SEEN MY FACE!
I KNOW.


YES! AS I SUSPECTED! I CONJURED YOU UP FROM MY MEMORY!
SINCE I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE BENEATH YOUR MASK, THERE'S NOTHING THERE!


RICK JONES ONCE TOLD ME THAT HE MATERIALIZED FIGURES FROM HIS MEMORY WHILE UNDER THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE'S MENTAL STIMULATION!*
THEY'RE FADING!
*CAP'S ONE TIME PARTNER IN AVENGERS #97- RECALLIN' RALF


I MUST HAVE--
WHAT--?!?


YOU HAVE PROVEN TO BE A MOST RESOURCEFUL ENEMY, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
NOT EVEN THE COMBINED MIGHT OF THOSE YOU DEEM YOUR WORST ENEMIES COULD VANQUISH YOU!
A PITY... FOR I WANTED TO BESTOW UPON YOU THE ULTIMATE HONOR ANY WARRIOR CAN HAVE...


...I WANTED TO ABSORB YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS INTO MY IMMORTAL GROUP INTELLECT.
BUT THIS CAN ONLY OCCUR AFTER THE CESSATION OF YOUR CORPOREAL FUNCTIONS--YOUR DEATH.
THUS I STIMULATED THE LATENT REALITY-SHAPING POTENTIAL LOCKED IN ALL TERRAN MINDS SO YOU MIGHT GIVE SHAPE TO YOUR DEATH-BRINGERS.
BUT STILL YOU WOULD NOT YIELD! STILL YOU WOULD NOT FALL!
IF I CAN JUST GET MY SHIELD ARM FREE--!
YOUR INSUFFERABLE DESIRE FOR FREEDOM--FOR INDEPENDENCE--MAKES YOU AN UNSUITABLE SUBJECT FOR ABSORPTION!
BEGONE, CAPTAIN AMERICA! IN THE SHORT TIME YOU HAVE LEFT TO LIVE, CONTEMPLATE HOW YOU SQUANDERED YOUR CHANCE FOR IMMORTALITY!
WHAT'S HE MEAN BY "THE SHORT TIME I HAVE LEFT TO LIVE"?
SURELY HE DOESN'T EXPECT A MERE FALL FROM THIS HEIGHT TO KILL ME!
MEANWHILE, A STARSHIP TOWING AN UNIMAGINABLY POWERFUL BOMB PASSES THROUGH AN ALIEN STARGATE AND ENTERS THE VICINITY OF EARTH'S SUN...
THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN ORDERS A COURSE BE SET FOR THE SECOND STARGATE A SCANT TEN THOUSAND MILES AWAY.
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT STARGATE IS THE KREE EMPIRE. IT IS THERE THE BOMB IS TO BE DETONATED...
...AND THE KREE GALAXY'S FIVE HUNDRED BILLION INHABITANTS TO DIE FROM ITS FALLOUT...!

CONTINUED IN AVENGERS WEST COAST #81--ON SALE NOW!

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PART 16
AVENGERS WEST COAST

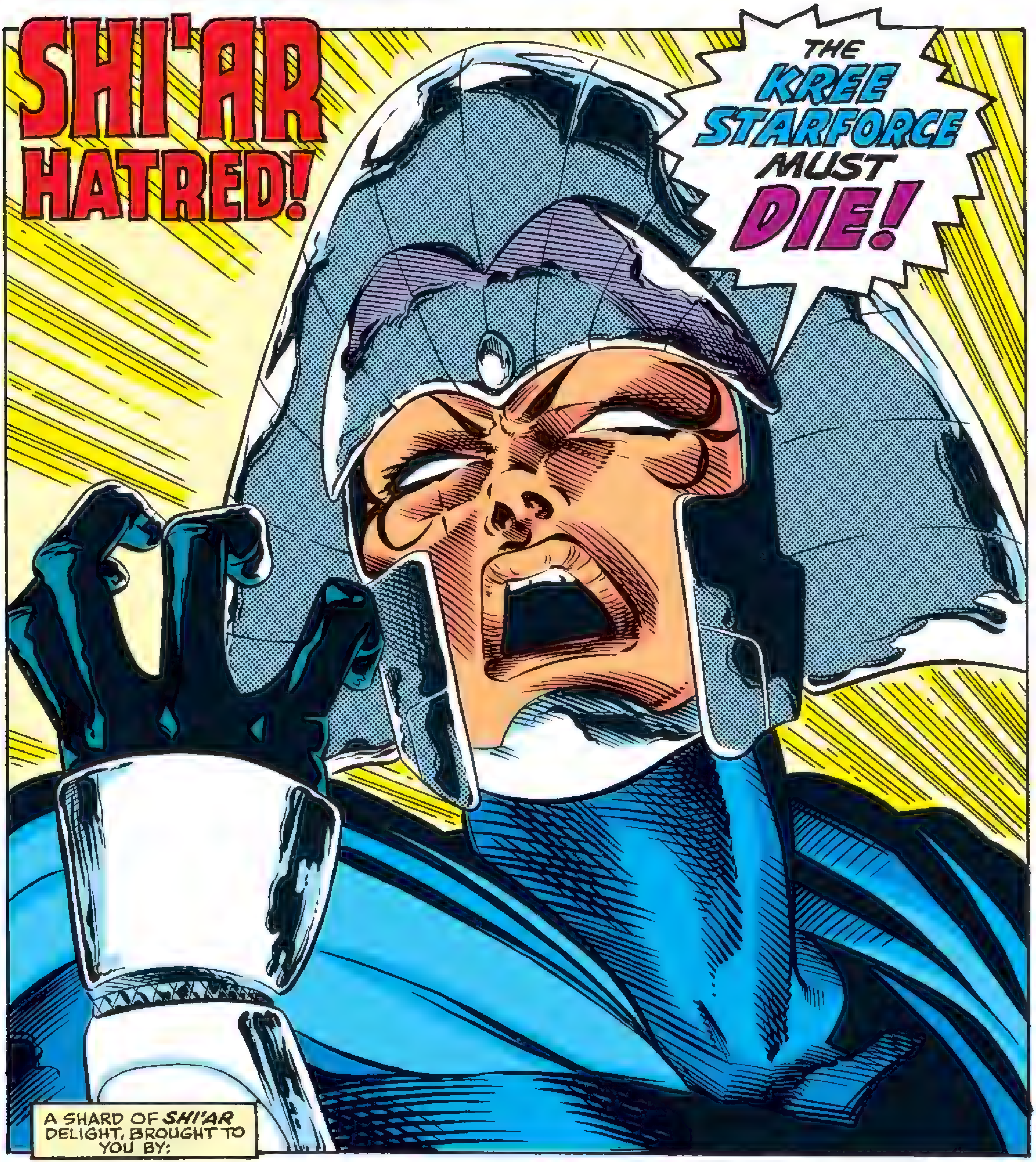
Stan Lee PRESENTS:

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

PART 16

AVENGERS
WEST
COAST

*AN ENVOY OF **AVENGERS** HAS JOURNEYED TO THE ALIEN **SHI'AR IMPERIUM** TO TRY TO STOP THE SHI'AR FROM WAGING WAR WITH THE **KREE EMPIRE!** NOW HOWEVER, THEY FIND THEMSELVES CAUGHT UP IN A PITCHED BATTLE BETWEEN THE SUPERHUMANOID CHAMPIONS OF BOTH GALACTIC POWERS — THE SHI'AR **IMPERIAL GUARD** AND THE KREE **STARFORCE!***

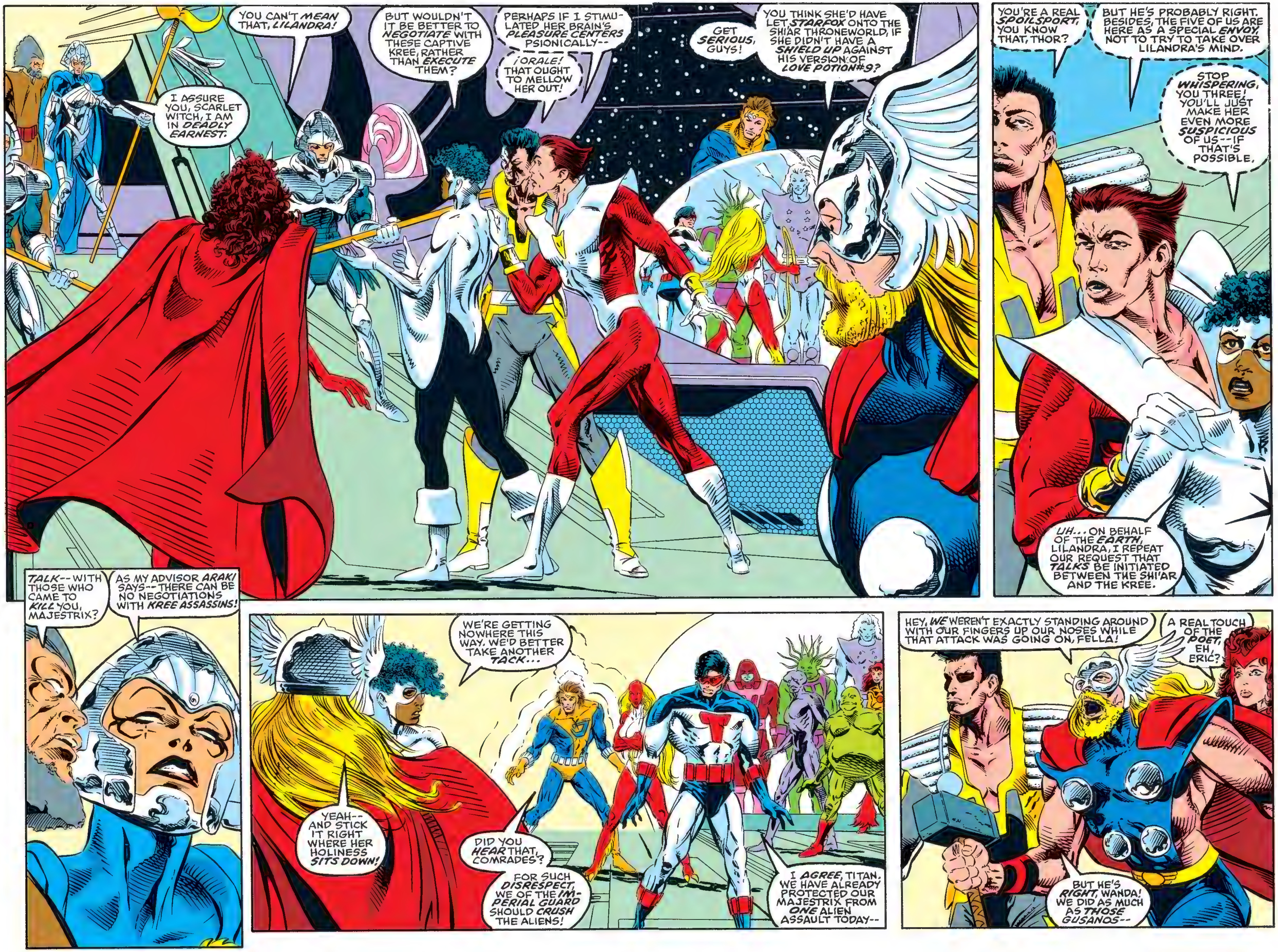


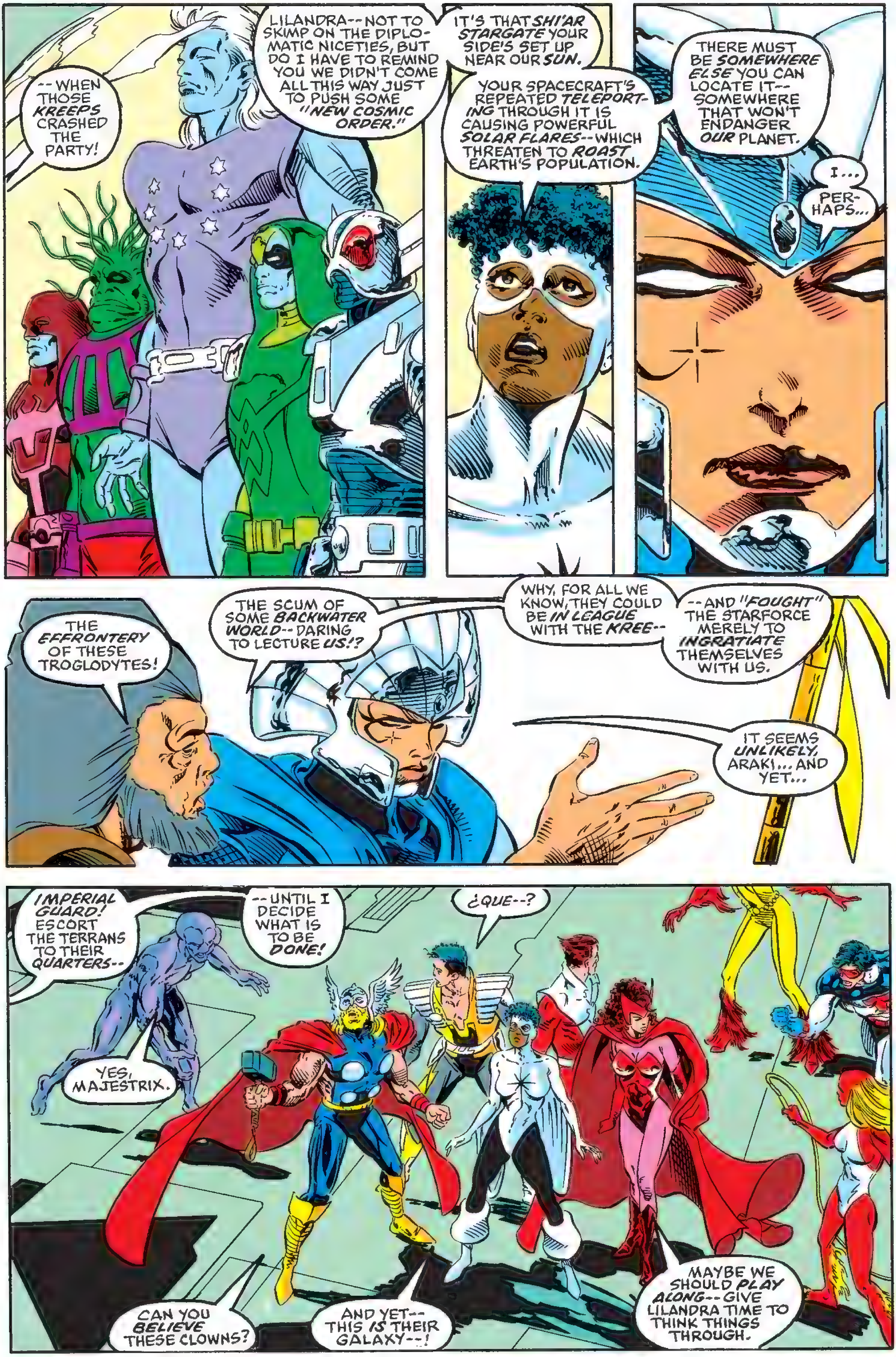
SHI'AR HATRED!

THE KREE STARFORCE MUST DIE!

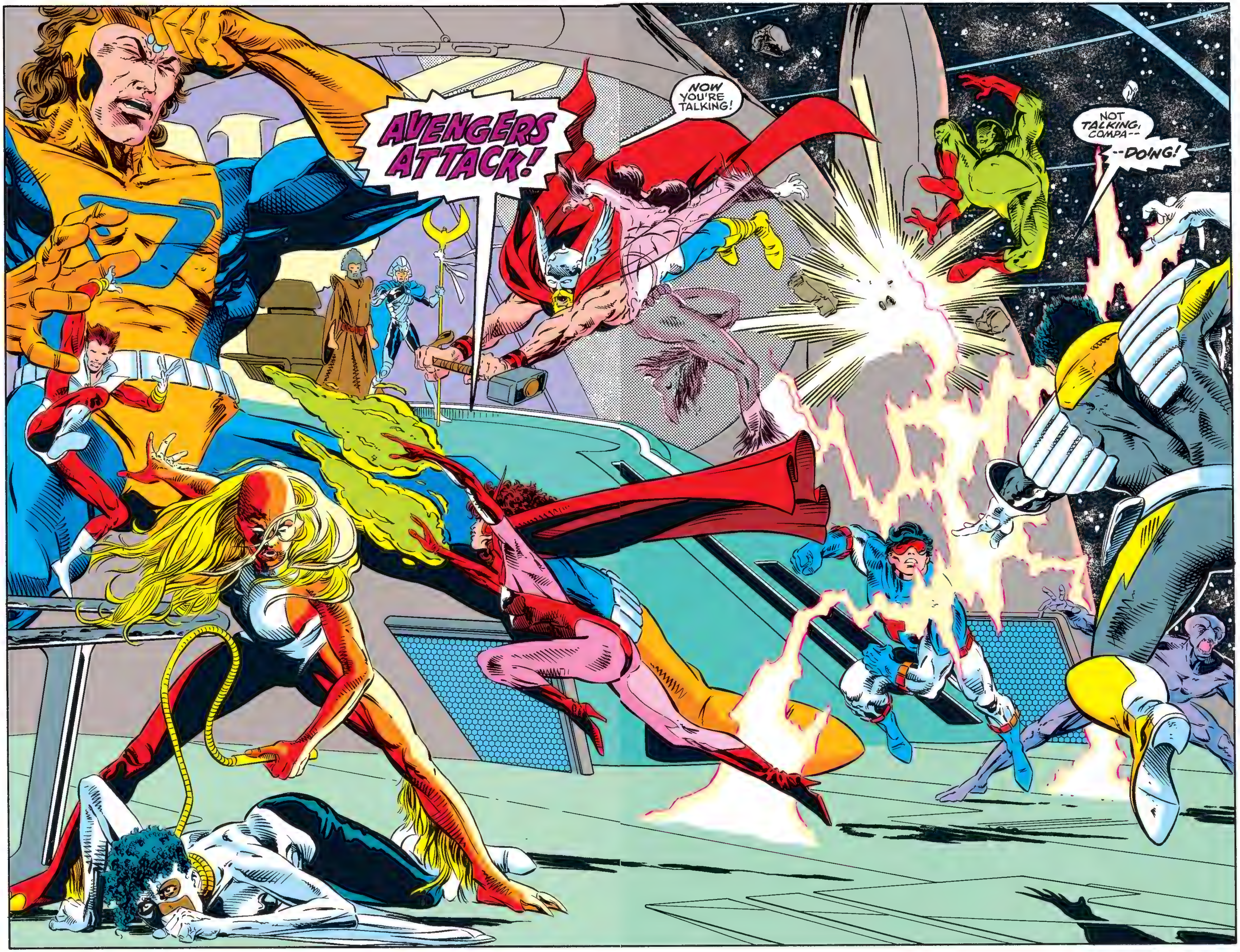
A SHARD OF *SHI'AR* DELIGHT, BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

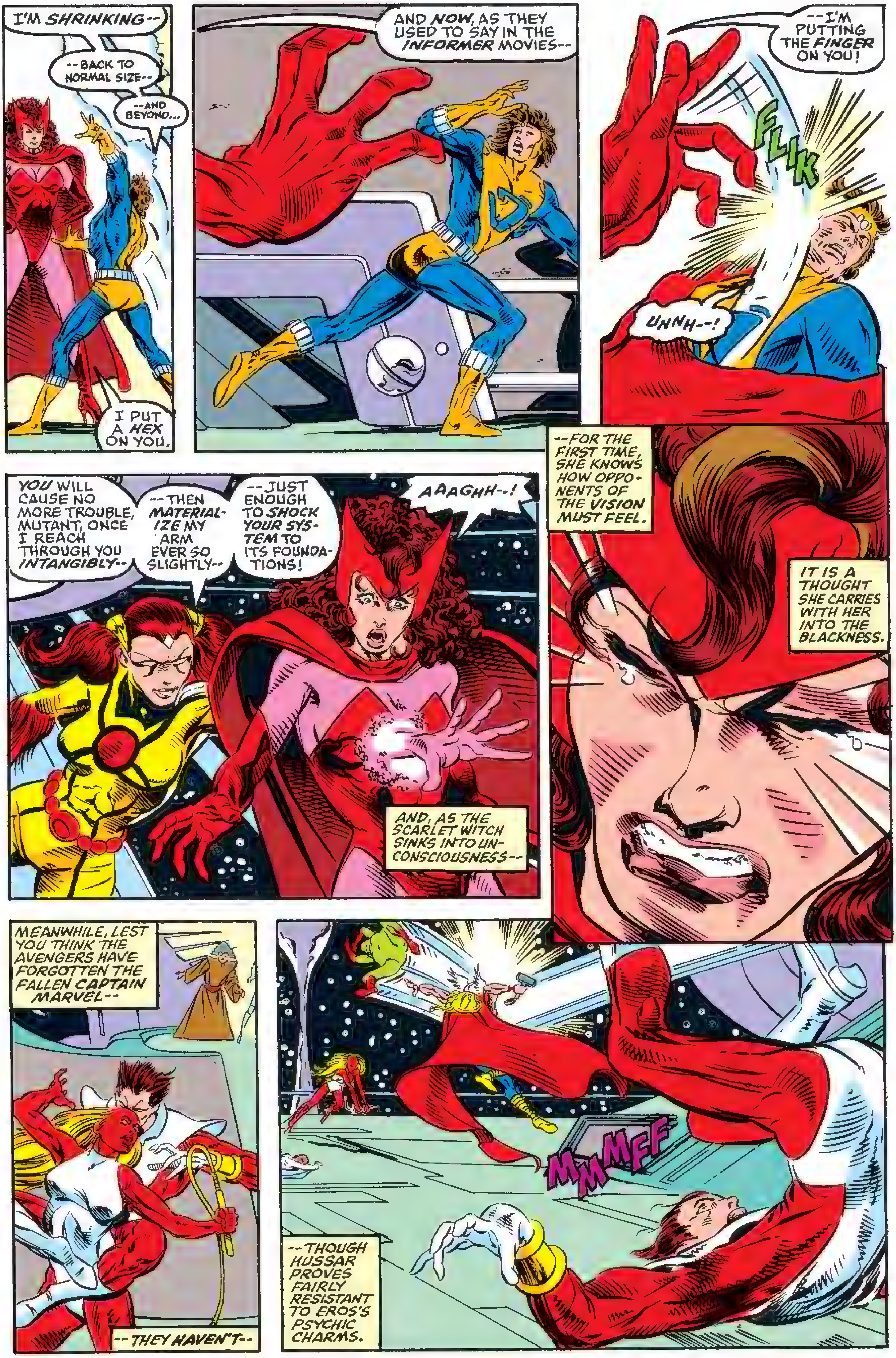
ROY & DANN THOMAS WRITERS
DAVID ROSS PENCILER
TIM DZON INKER
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
BOB SHAREN COLORIST
NEL YOMTOV EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

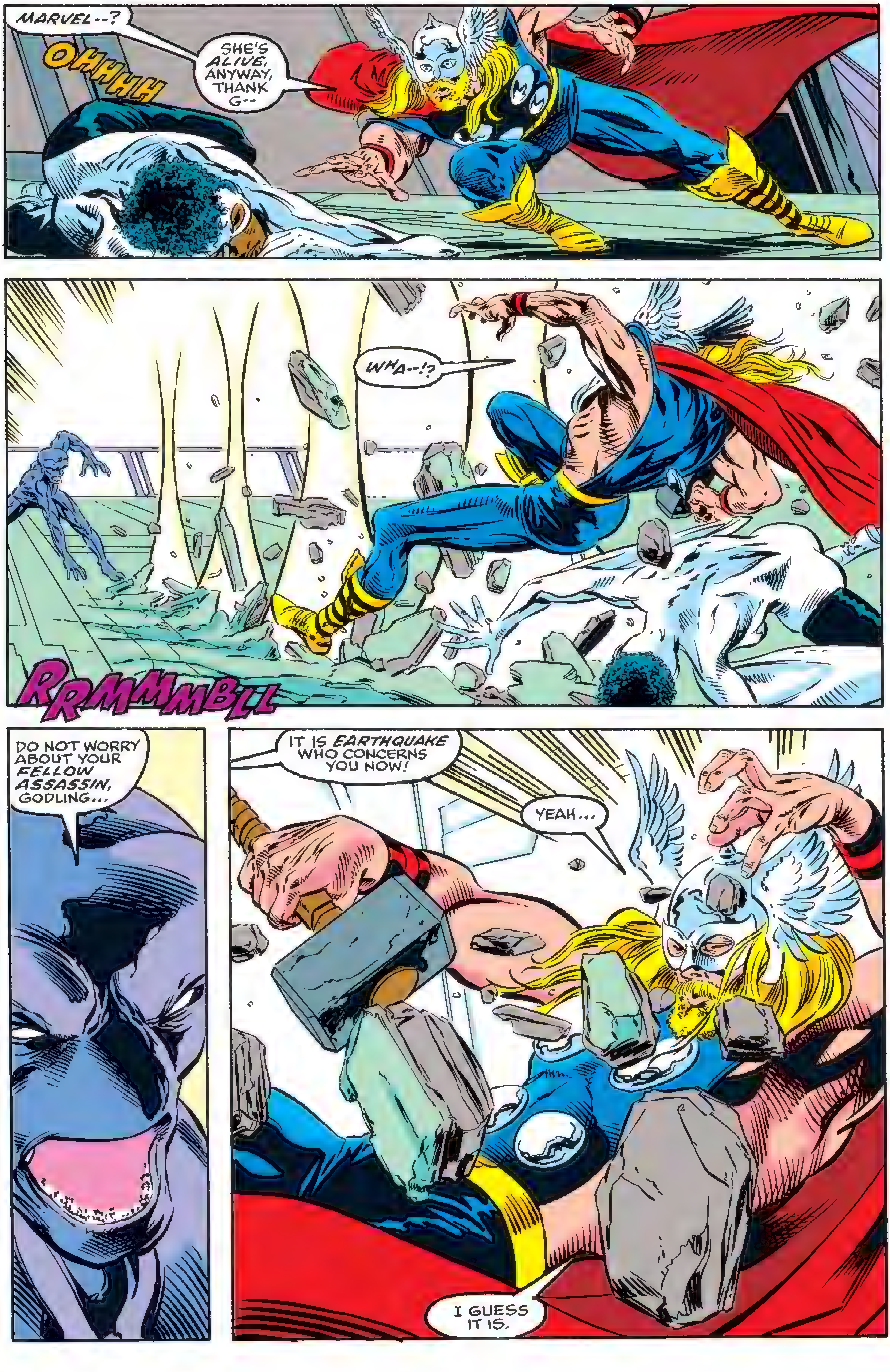

YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT, LILANDRA!
I ASSURE YOU, SCARLET WITCH, I AM IN DEADLY EARNEST.
BUT WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO NEGOTIATE WITH THESE CAPTIVE KREE, RATHER THAN EXECUTE THEM?
PERHAPS IF I STIMULATED HER BRAIN'S PLEASURE CENTERS PSIONICALLY--
¡ORALE! THAT OUGHT TO MELLOW HER OUT!
GET SERIOUS, GUYS!
YOU THINK SHE'D HAVE LET STARFOX ONTO THE SHI'AR THRONEWORLD, IF SHE DIDN'T HAVE A SHIELD UP AGAINST HIS VERSION OF LOVE POTION #9?
YOU'RE A REAL SPOILSPORT, YOU KNOW THAT, THOR?
BUT HE'S PROBABLY RIGHT. BESIDES, THE FIVE OF US ARE HERE AS A SPECIAL ENVOY, NOT TO TRY TO TAKE OVER LILANDRA'S MIND.
STOP WHISPERING, YOU THREE! YOU'LL JUST MAKE HER EVEN MORE SUSPICIOUS OF US--IF THAT'S POSSIBLE.
UH... ON BEHALF OF THE EARTH, LILANDRA, I REPEAT OUR REQUEST THAT TALKS BE INITIATED BETWEEN THE SHI'AR AND THE KREE.
TALK--WITH THOSE WHO CAME TO KILL YOU, MAJESTRIX?
AS MY ADVISOR ARAKI SAYS--THERE CAN BE NO NEGOTIATIONS WITH KREE ASSASSINS!
WE'RE GETTING NOWHERE THIS WAY. WE'D BETTER TAKE ANOTHER TACK...
YEAH--AND STICK IT RIGHT WHERE HER HOLINESS SITS DOWN!
DID YOU HEAR THAT, COMRADES?
FOR SUCH DISRESPECT, WE OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD SHOULD CRUSH THE ALIENS!
I AGREE, TITAN. WE HAVE ALREADY PROTECTED OUR MAJESTRIX FROM ONE ALIEN ASSAULT TODAY--
HEY, WE WEREN'T EXACTLY STANDING AROUND WITH OUR FINGERS UP OUR NOSES WHILE THAT ATTACK WAS GOING ON, FELLA!
A REAL TOUCH OF THE POET, EH, ERIC?
BUT HE'S RIGHT, WANDA! WE DID AS MUCH AS THOSE GUSANOS--

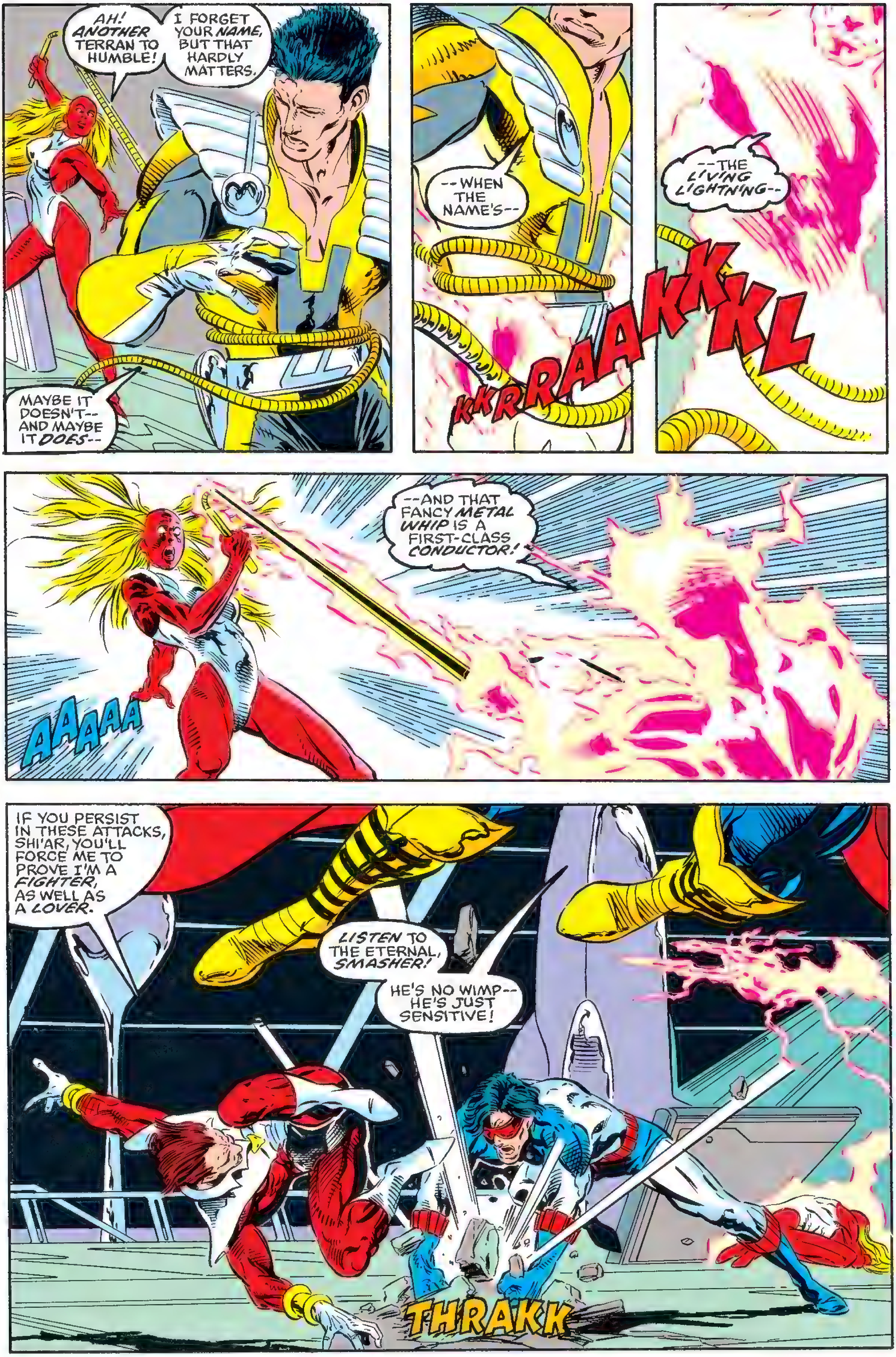

--WHEN THOSE *KREEPS* CRASHED THE PARTY!
LILANDRA--NOT TO SKIMP ON THE DIPLOMATIC NICETIES, BUT DO I HAVE TO REMIND YOU WE DIDN'T COME ALL THIS WAY JUST TO PUSH SOME *"NEW COSMIC ORDER."*
IT'S THAT *SHI'AR STARGATE* YOUR SIDE'S SET UP NEAR OUR *SUN.*
YOUR SPACECRAFT'S REPEATED *TELEPORTING* THROUGH IT IS CAUSING POWERFUL *SOLAR FLARES*--WHICH THREATEN TO *ROAST* EARTH'S POPULATION.
THERE MUST BE *SOMEWHERE ELSE* YOU CAN LOCATE IT--SOMEWHERE THAT WON'T ENDANGER *OUR* PLANET.
I... PERHAPS...
THE *EFFRONTERY* OF THESE TROGLODYTES!
THE SCUM OF SOME *BACKWATER WORLD*--DARING TO LECTURE *US!?*
WHY, FOR ALL WE KNOW, THEY COULD BE *IN LEAGUE* WITH THE *KREE*--
--AND *"FOUGHT"* THE STARFORCE MERELY TO *INGRATIATE* THEMSELVES WITH US.
IT SEEMS *UNLIKELY,* ARAKI... AND YET...
IMPERIAL GUARD! ESCORT THE TERRANS TO THEIR *QUARTERS*--
--UNTIL I DECIDE WHAT IS TO BE *DONE!*
¿QUE--?
YES, MAJESTRIX.
CAN YOU *BELIEVE* THESE CLOWNS?
AND YET--THIS *IS* THEIR GALAXY--!
MAYBE WE SHOULD *PLAY ALONG*--GIVE LILANDRA TIME TO THINK THINGS THROUGH.

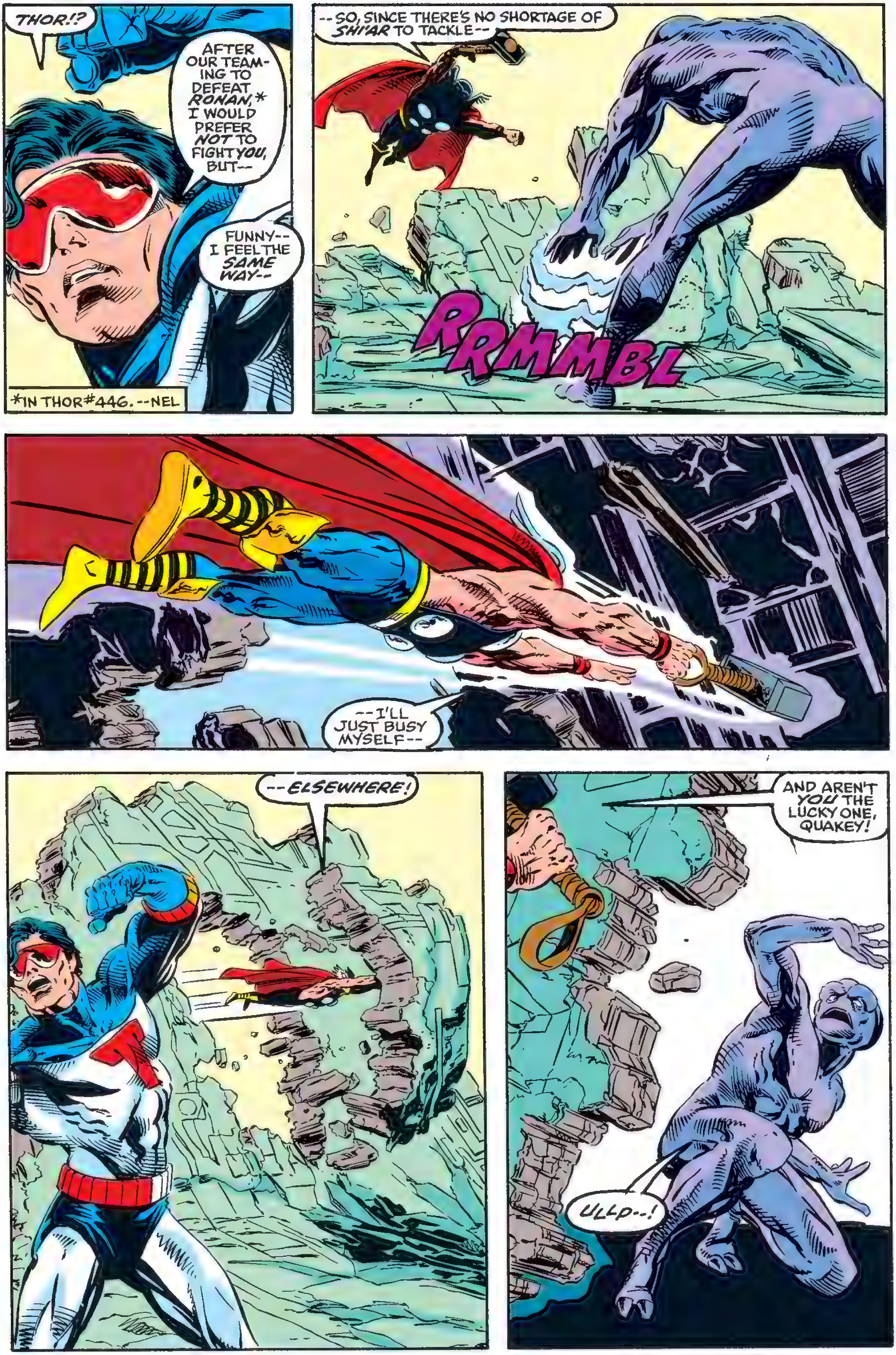
WELL-- IF YOU TWO THINK SO-- BUT I STILL DON'T--
HEY! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE PUSHING, FELLA?
MOVE ALONG, TERRAN!
I'M THOR--
--AT LEAST, I AM THIS WEEK--
--AND YOU'RE GOING TO BE A WHOLE LOT THOR-ER!
AVENGER--!
WHOMM
I KNOW, I KNOW--IT'S THE OLDEST PUN THIS SIDE OF ASGARD, BUT I COULDN'T RESIST.
YOU HAMMER-HAPPY HOTHEAD!
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A PEACE ENVOY!
PUT DOWN THAT CROQUET MALLET BEFORE I--
HUH?
YOU LIKE GIVING ORDERS, DON'T YOU, CAPTAIN MARVEL?
WELL, SO DOES HUSSAR--
--AND MY NEURO-WHIP MAKES ME FAR MORE QUALIFIED TO DO SO!
OF COURSE, IT CAN ALSO SIMPLY CHOKE!
URRGG
RELEASE HER, WOMAN, BEFORE YOU FORCE US TO-- NNGGN
BEFORE YOU WHAT??
TITAN WENT KING-SIZE-- AND GRABBED 'FOX!
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, WANDA?
WHAT I SHOULD'VE SAID BEFORE, MIGUEL...

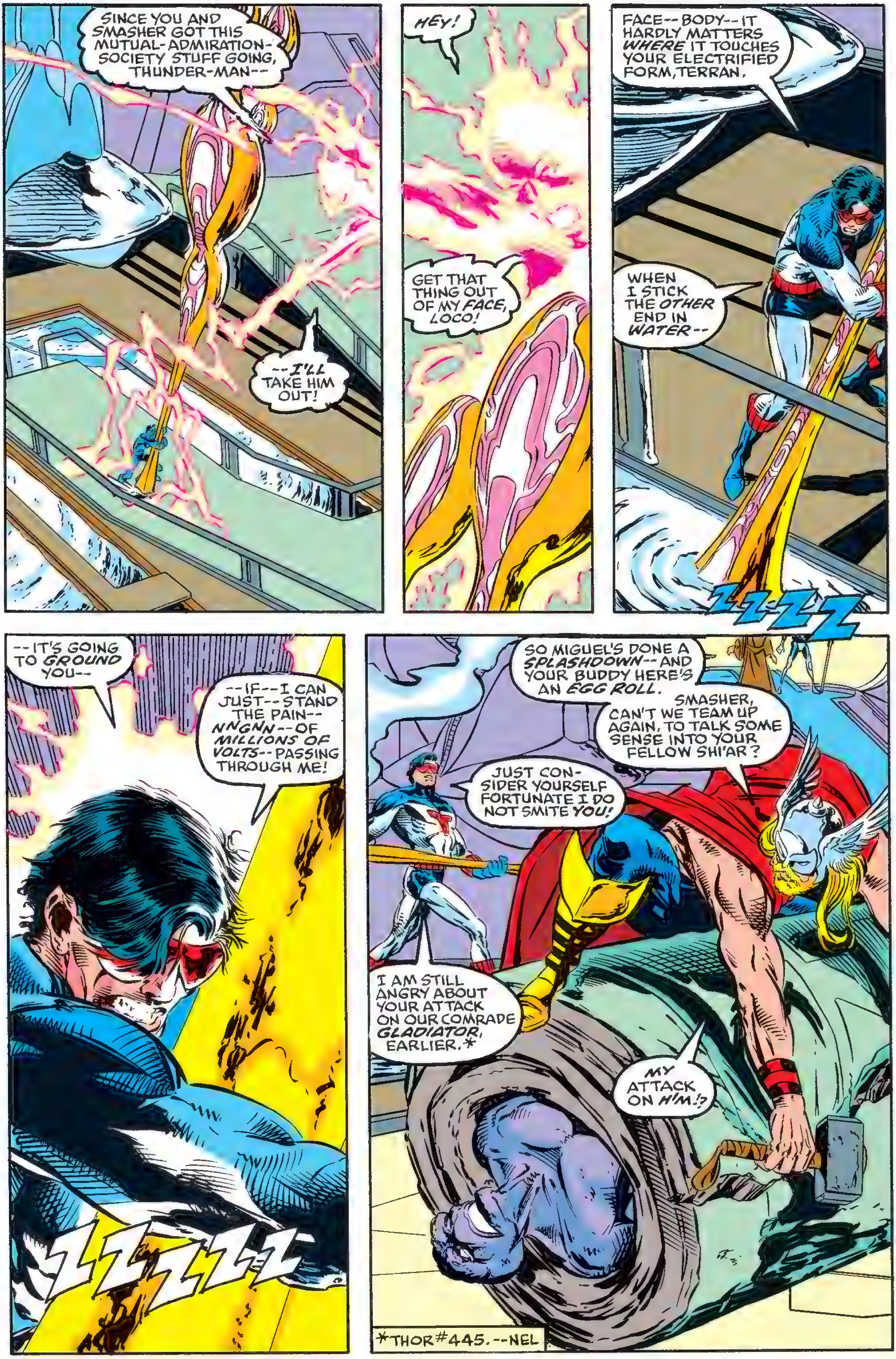

AVENGERS ATTACK!
NOW YOU'RE TALKING!
NOT TALKING, COMPA--
--DOING!

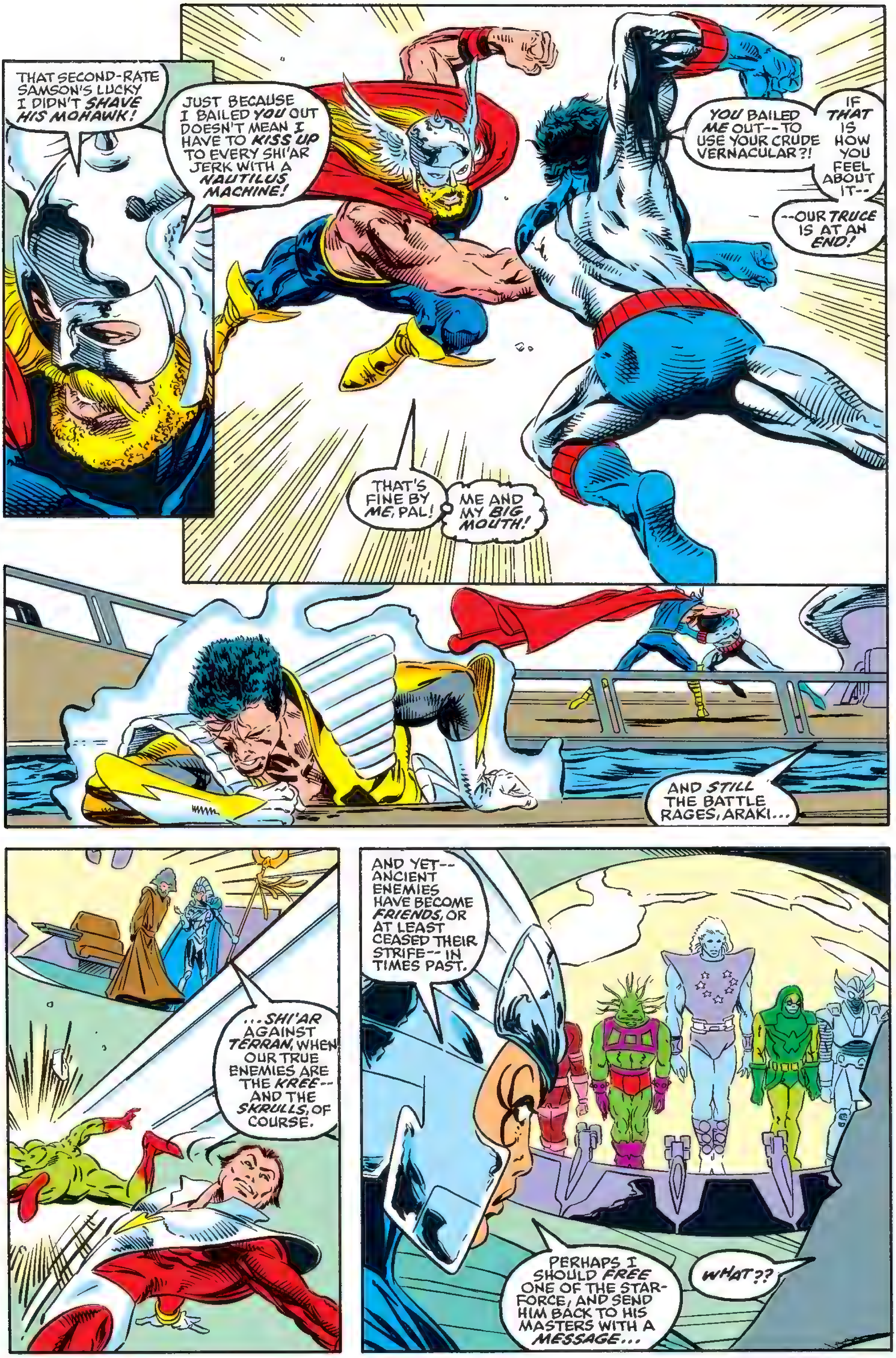

I'M SHRINKING--
--BACK TO NORMAL SIZE--
--AND BEYOND...
I PUT A HEX ON YOU.
AND NOW, AS THEY USED TO SAY IN THE INFORMER MOVIES--
--I'M PUTTING THE FINGER ON YOU!
FLIK
UNNH--!
YOU WILL CAUSE NO MORE TROUBLE, MUTANT, ONCE I REACH THROUGH YOU INTANGIBLY--
--THEN MATERIALIZE MY ARM EVER SO SLIGHTLY--
--JUST ENOUGH TO SHOCK YOUR SYSTEM TO ITS FOUNDATIONS!
AAAGHH--!
AND, AS THE SCARLET WITCH SINKS INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS--
--FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHE KNOWS HOW OPPONENTS OF THE VISION MUST FEEL.
IT IS A THOUGHT SHE CARRIES WITH HER INTO THE BLACKNESS.
MEANWHILE, LEST YOU THINK THE AVENGERS HAVE FORGOTTEN THE FALLEN CAPTAIN MARVEL--
--THEY HAVEN'T--
MMMFF
--THOUGH HUSSAR PROVES FAIRLY RESISTANT TO EROS'S PSYCHIC CHARMS.

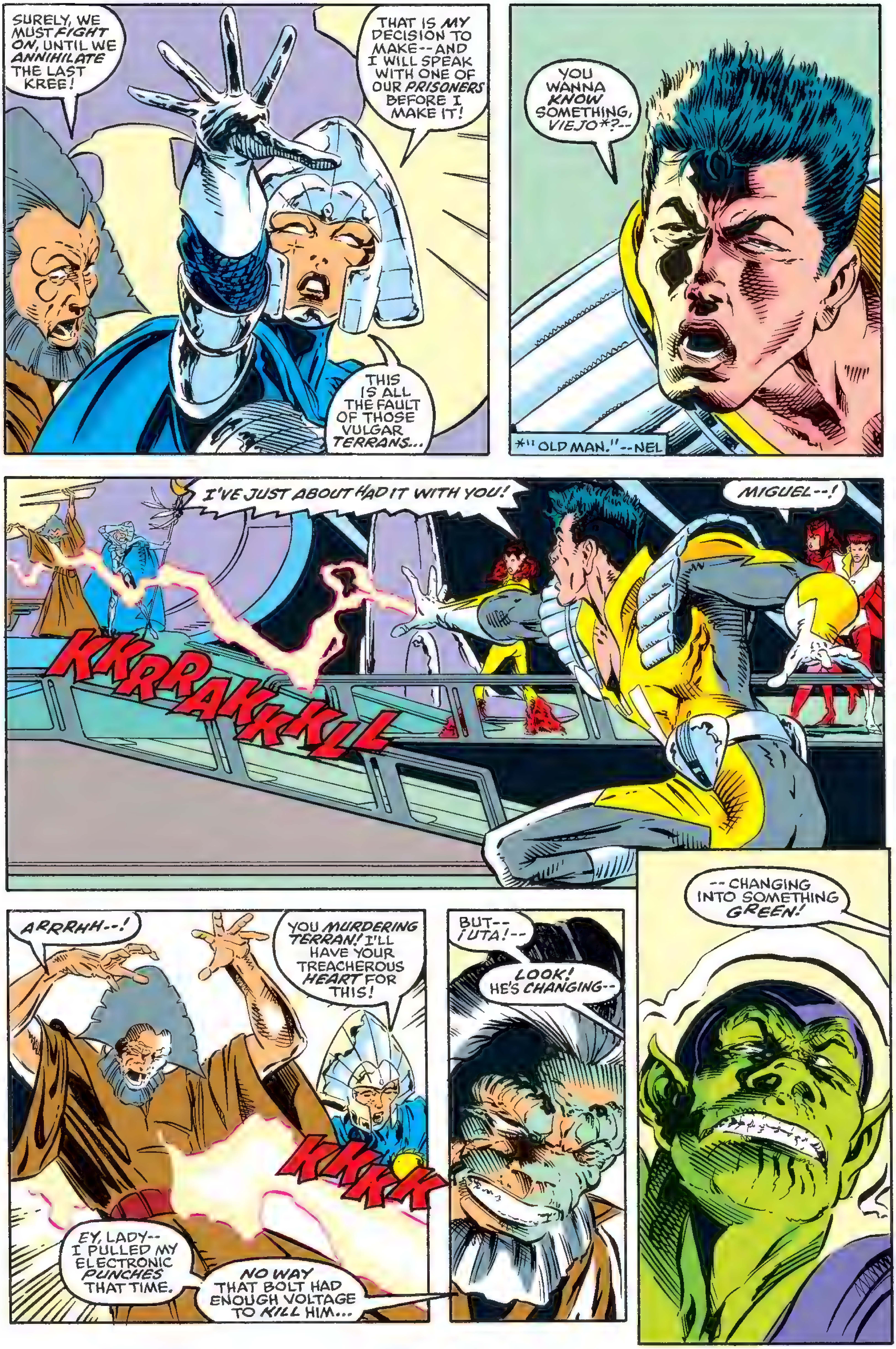

MARVEL--?
OHHHH
SHE'S *ALIVE*, ANYWAY, THANK G--
WHA--!?
RRMMMMBLL
DO NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR *FELLOW ASSASSIN*, GODLING...
IT IS *EARTHQUAKE* WHO CONCERNS YOU NOW!
YEAH...
I GUESS IT IS.

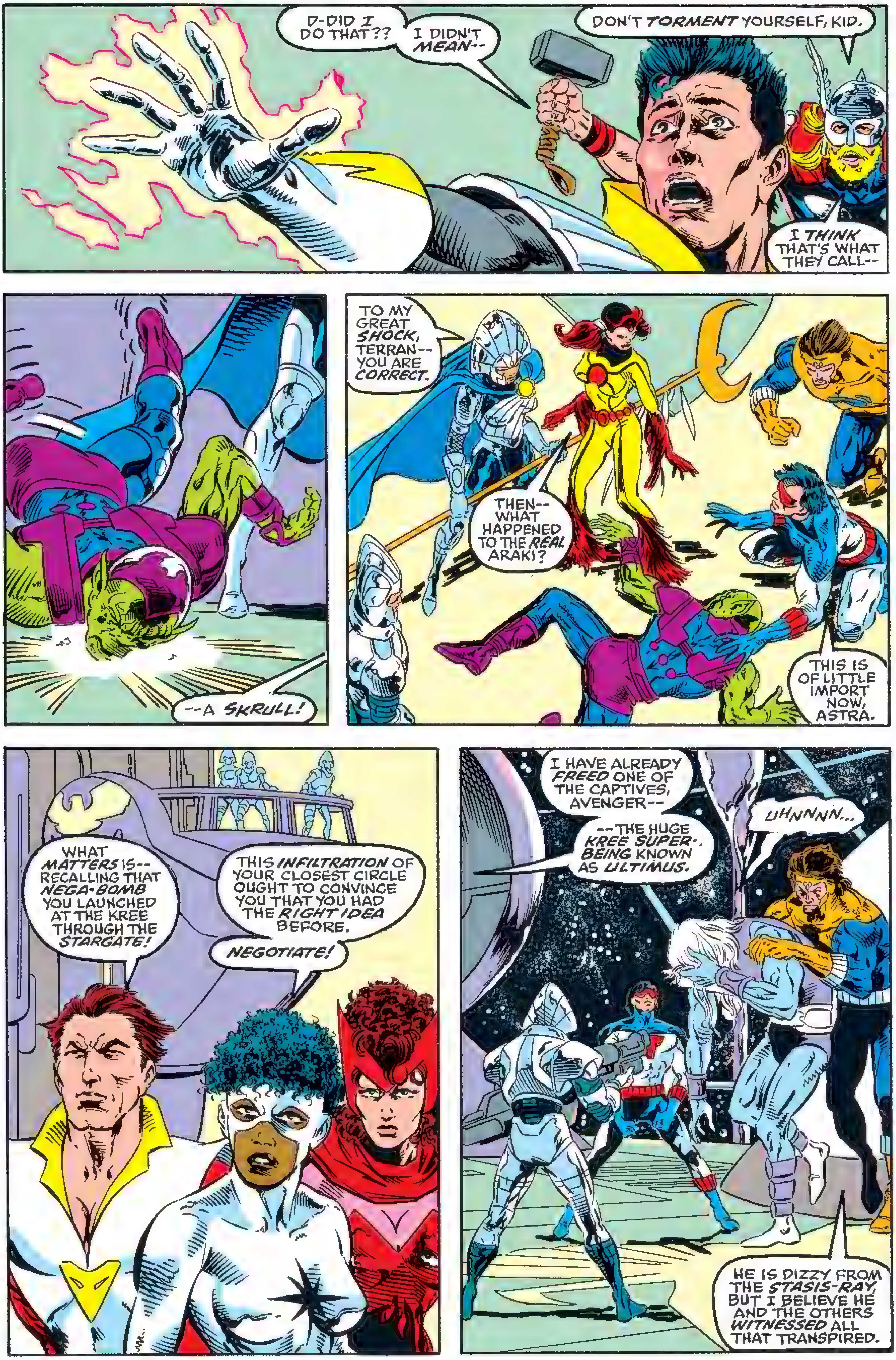

AH! ANOTHER TERRAN TO HUMBLE!
I FORGET YOUR NAME, BUT THAT HARDLY MATTERS.
MAYBE IT DOESN'T-- AND MAYBE IT DOES--
--WHEN THE NAME'S--
--THE LIVING LIGHTNING--
KKRRAAAKKKKL
--AND THAT FANCY METAL WHIP IS A FIRST-CLASS CONDUCTOR!
AAAAA
IF YOU PERSIST IN THESE ATTACKS, SHI'AR, YOU'LL FORCE ME TO PROVE I'M A FIGHTER, AS WELL AS A LOVER.
LISTEN TO THE ETERNAL, SMASHER!
HE'S NO WIMP-- HE'S JUST SENSITIVE!
THRAKK

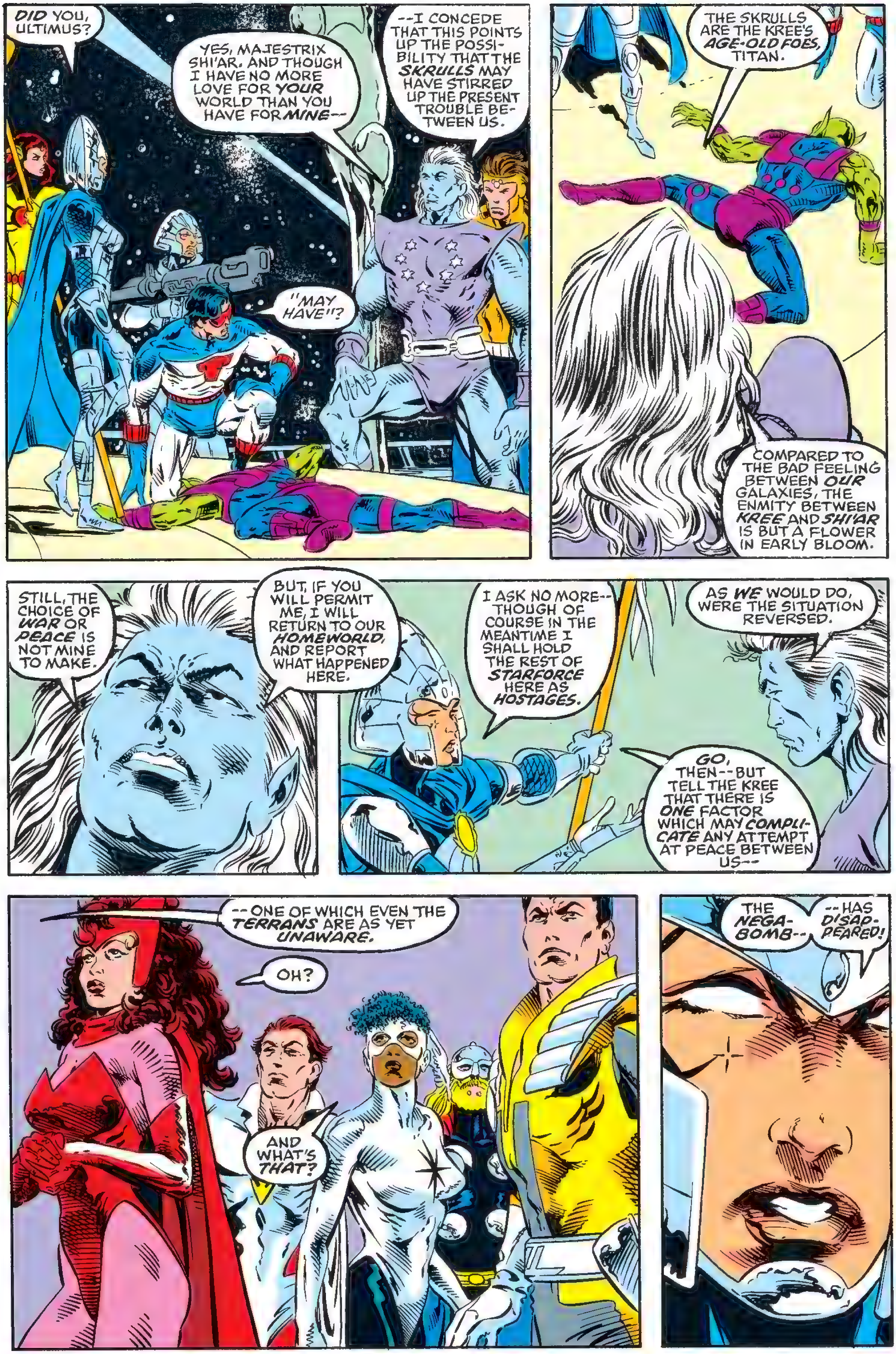

THOR!?
AFTER OUR TEAMING TO DEFEAT *RONAN*,* I WOULD PREFER *NOT* TO FIGHT *YOU*, BUT--
FUNNY-- I FEEL THE *SAME* WAY--
*IN THOR#446.--NEL
--SO, SINCE THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF *SHI'AR* TO TACKLE--
RRMMBL
--I'LL JUST BUSY MYSELF--
--*ELSEWHERE!*
AND AREN'T *YOU* THE LUCKY ONE, QUAKEY!
ULLP--!

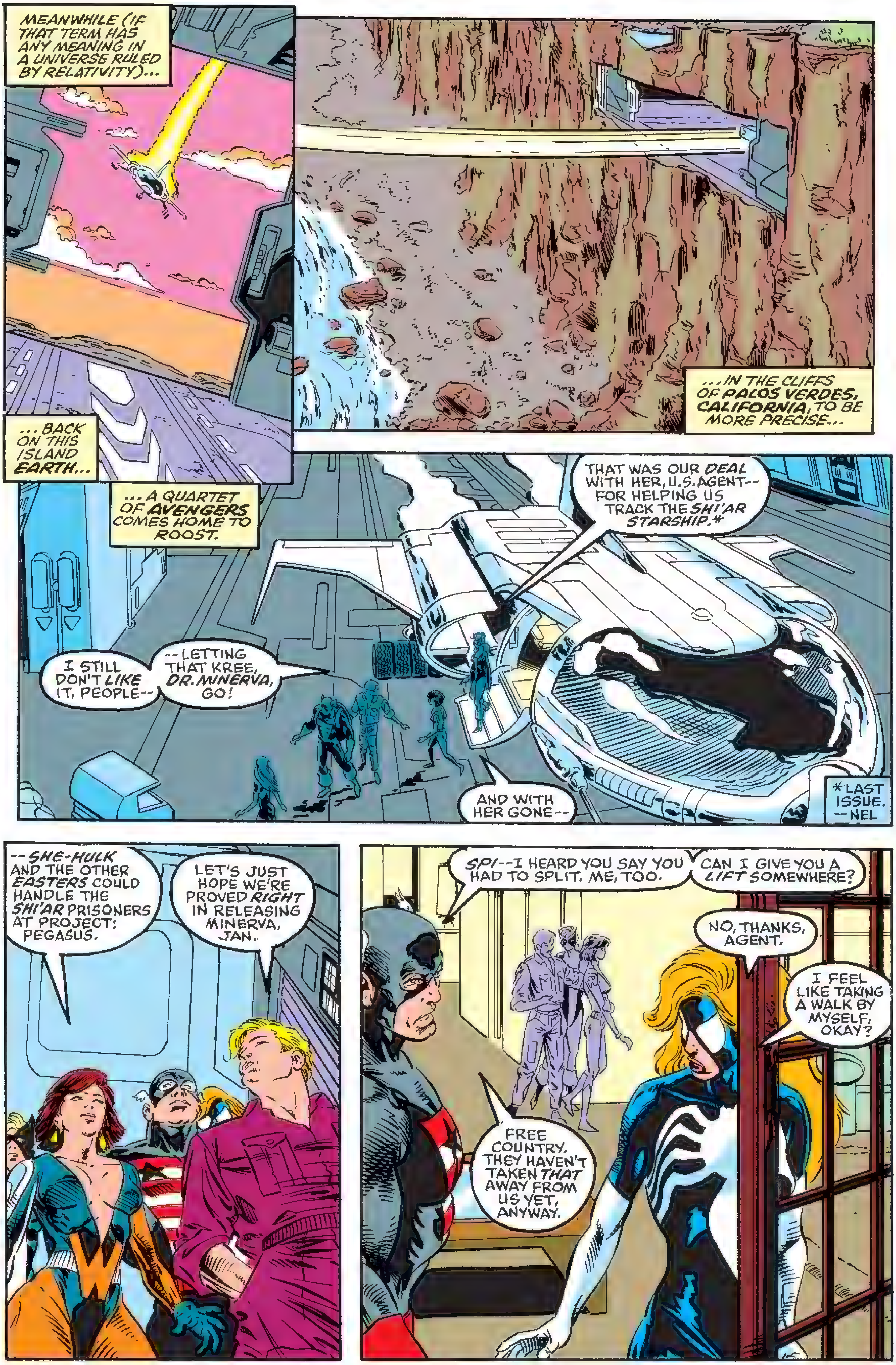

SINCE YOU AND SMASHER GOT THIS MUTUAL-ADMIRATION-SOCIETY STUFF GOING, THUNDER-MAN--
--I'LL TAKE HIM OUT!
HEY!
GET THAT THING OUT OF MY FACE, LOCO!
FACE--BODY--IT HARDLY MATTERS WHERE IT TOUCHES YOUR ELECTRIFIED FORM, TERRAN.
WHEN I STICK THE OTHER END IN WATER--
ZZZZ
--IT'S GOING TO GROUND YOU--
--IF--I CAN JUST--STAND THE PAIN--NNGNN--OF MILLIONS OF VOLTS--PASSING THROUGH ME!
ZZZZZZ
SO MIGUEL'S DONE A SPLASHDOWN--AND YOUR BUDDY HERE'S AN EGG ROLL.
SMASHER, CAN'T WE TEAM UP AGAIN, TO TALK SOME SENSE INTO YOUR FELLOW SHI'AR?
JUST CONSIDER YOURSELF FORTUNATE I DO NOT SMITE YOU!
I AM STILL ANGRY ABOUT YOUR ATTACK ON OUR COMRADE GLADIATOR, EARLIER.*
MY ATTACK ON HIM!?
*THOR #445.--NEL

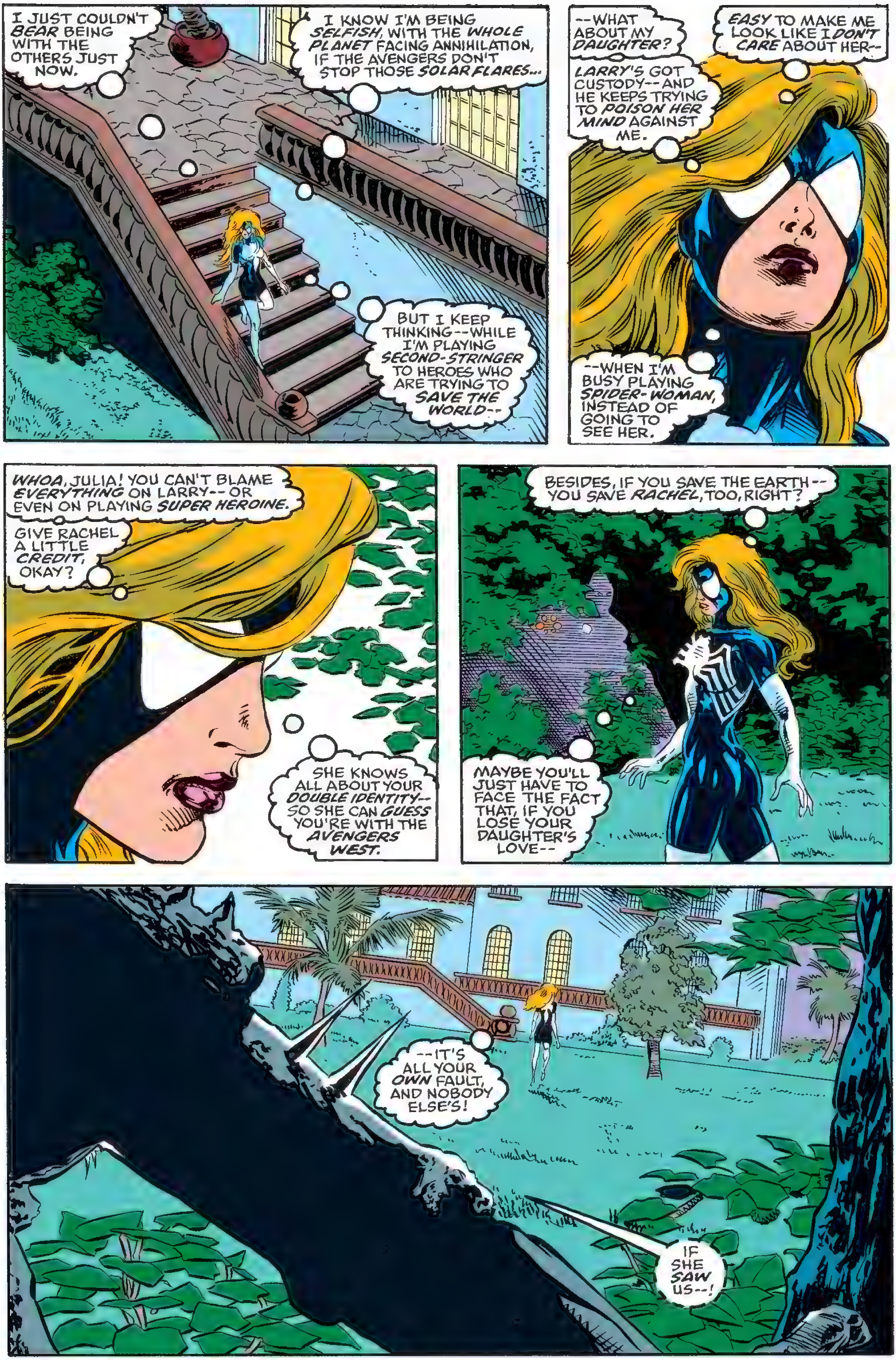

THAT SECOND-RATE SAMSON'S LUCKY I DIDN'T *SHAVE HIS MOHAWK!*
JUST BECAUSE I BAILED *YOU* OUT DOESN'T MEAN *I* HAVE TO *KISS UP* TO EVERY SHI'AR JERK WITH A *NAUTILUS MACHINE!*
YOU BAILED *ME* OUT--TO USE YOUR CRUDE VERNACULAR?!
IF *THAT* IS HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT IT--
--OUR *TRUCE* IS AT AN *END!*
THAT'S FINE BY *ME*, PAL!
ME AND MY *BIG MOUTH!*
AND *STILL* THE BATTLE RAGES, ARAKI...
...*SHI'AR* AGAINST *TERRAN*, WHEN OUR TRUE ENEMIES ARE THE *KREE*--AND THE *SKRULLS*, OF COURSE.
AND YET--ANCIENT ENEMIES HAVE BECOME *FRIENDS*, OR AT LEAST CEASED THEIR STRIFE--IN TIMES PAST.
PERHAPS I SHOULD *FREE* ONE OF THE STAR-FORCE, AND SEND HIM BACK TO HIS MASTERS WITH A *MESSAGE...*
WHAT??

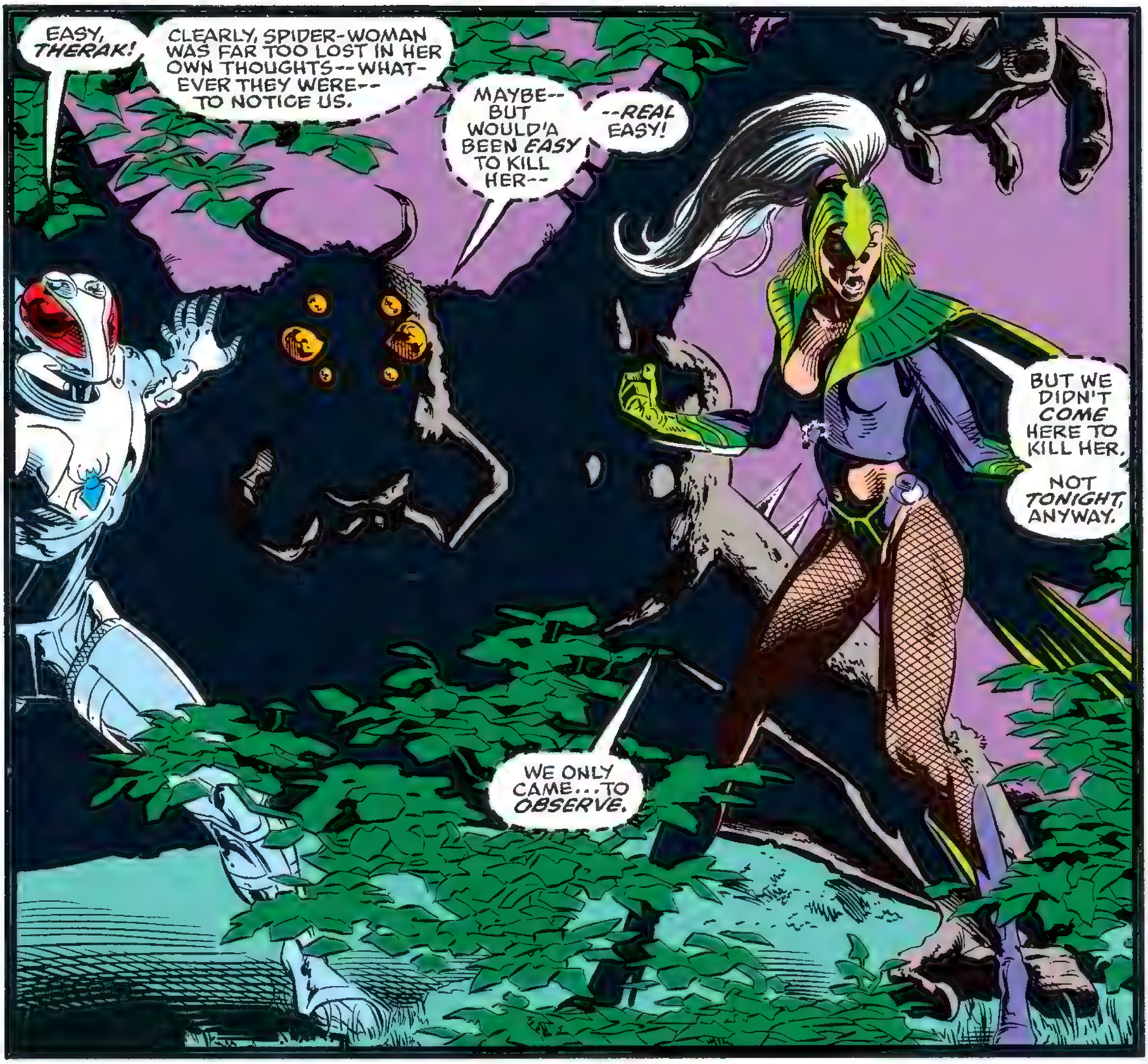

SURELY, WE MUST FIGHT ON, UNTIL WE ANNIHILATE THE LAST KREE!
THAT IS MY DECISION TO MAKE--AND I WILL SPEAK WITH ONE OF OUR PRISONERS BEFORE I MAKE IT!
THIS IS ALL THE FAULT OF THOSE VULGAR TERRANS...
YOU WANNA KNOW SOMETHING, VIEJO*?--
*"OLD MAN."--NEL
I'VE JUST ABOUT HAD IT WITH YOU!
MIGUEL--!
KKRRAKKKLL
ARRRHH--!
YOU MURDERING TERRAN! I'LL HAVE YOUR TREACHEROUS HEART FOR THIS!
KKKK
EY, LADY-- I PULLED MY ELECTRONIC PUNCHES THAT TIME.
NO WAY THAT BOLT HAD ENOUGH VOLTAGE TO KILL HIM...
BUT-- ¡UTA!--
LOOK! HE'S CHANGING--
--CHANGING INTO SOMETHING GREEN!

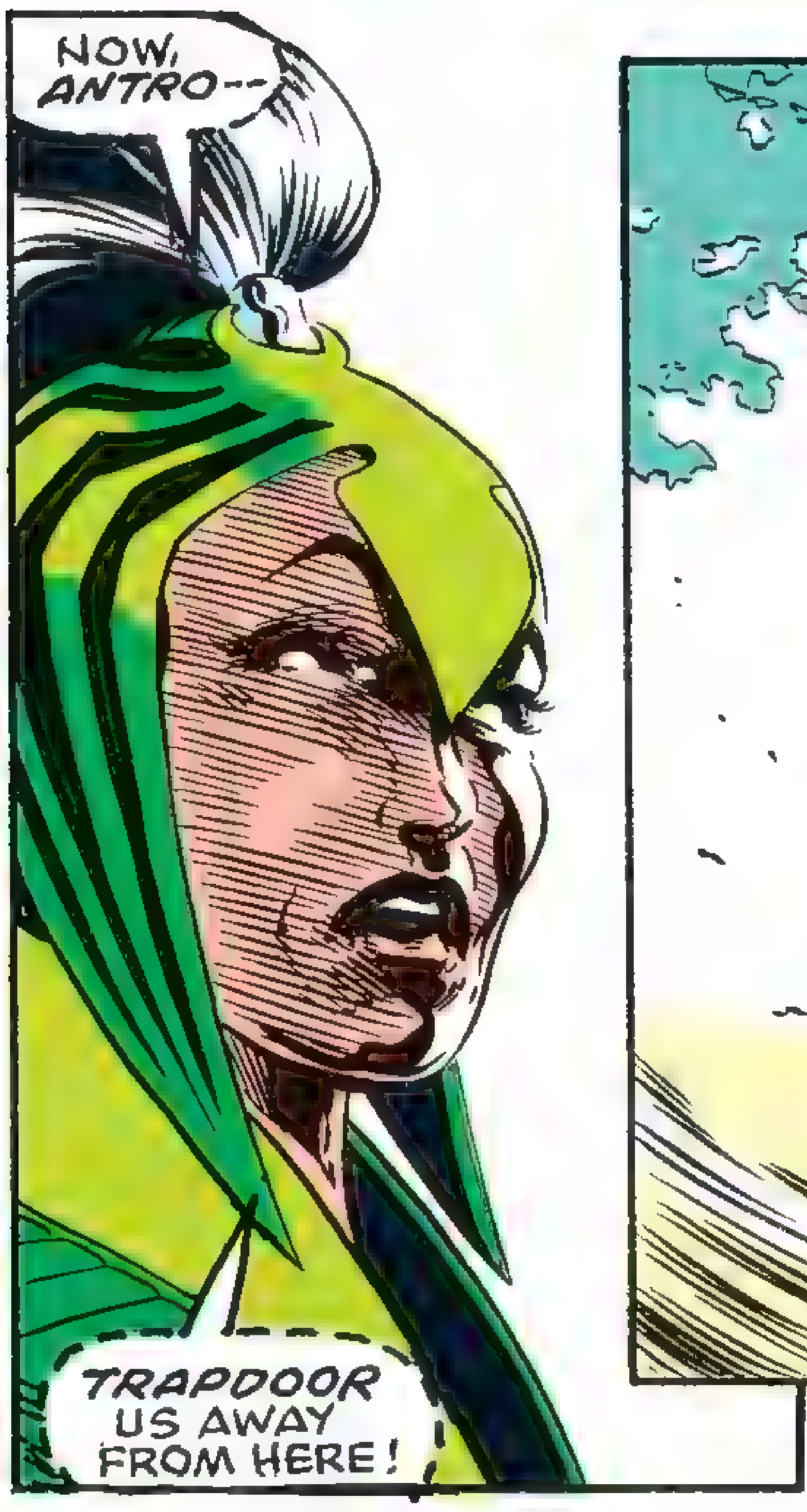

D-DID I DO THAT?? I DIDN'T *MEAN*--
DON'T *TORMENT* YOURSELF, KID.
I *THINK* THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL--
--A *SKRULL!*
TO MY GREAT *SHOCK*, TERRAN--YOU ARE *CORRECT*.
THEN--WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *REAL* ARAKI?
THIS IS OF LITTLE IMPORT NOW, ASTRA.
WHAT *MATTERS* IS--RECALLING THAT *NEGA-BOMB* YOU LAUNCHED AT THE KREE THROUGH THE *STARGATE!*
THIS *INFILTRATION* OF YOUR CLOSEST CIRCLE OUGHT TO CONVINCE YOU THAT YOU HAD THE *RIGHT IDEA* BEFORE.
NEGOTIATE!
I HAVE ALREADY *FREED* ONE OF THE CAPTIVES, AVENGER--
--THE HUGE *KREE SUPER-BEING* KNOWN AS *ULTIMUS*.
UHNNNN...
HE IS DIZZY FROM THE *STASIS-RAY*, BUT I BELIEVE HE AND THE OTHERS *WITNESSED* ALL THAT TRANSPIRED.

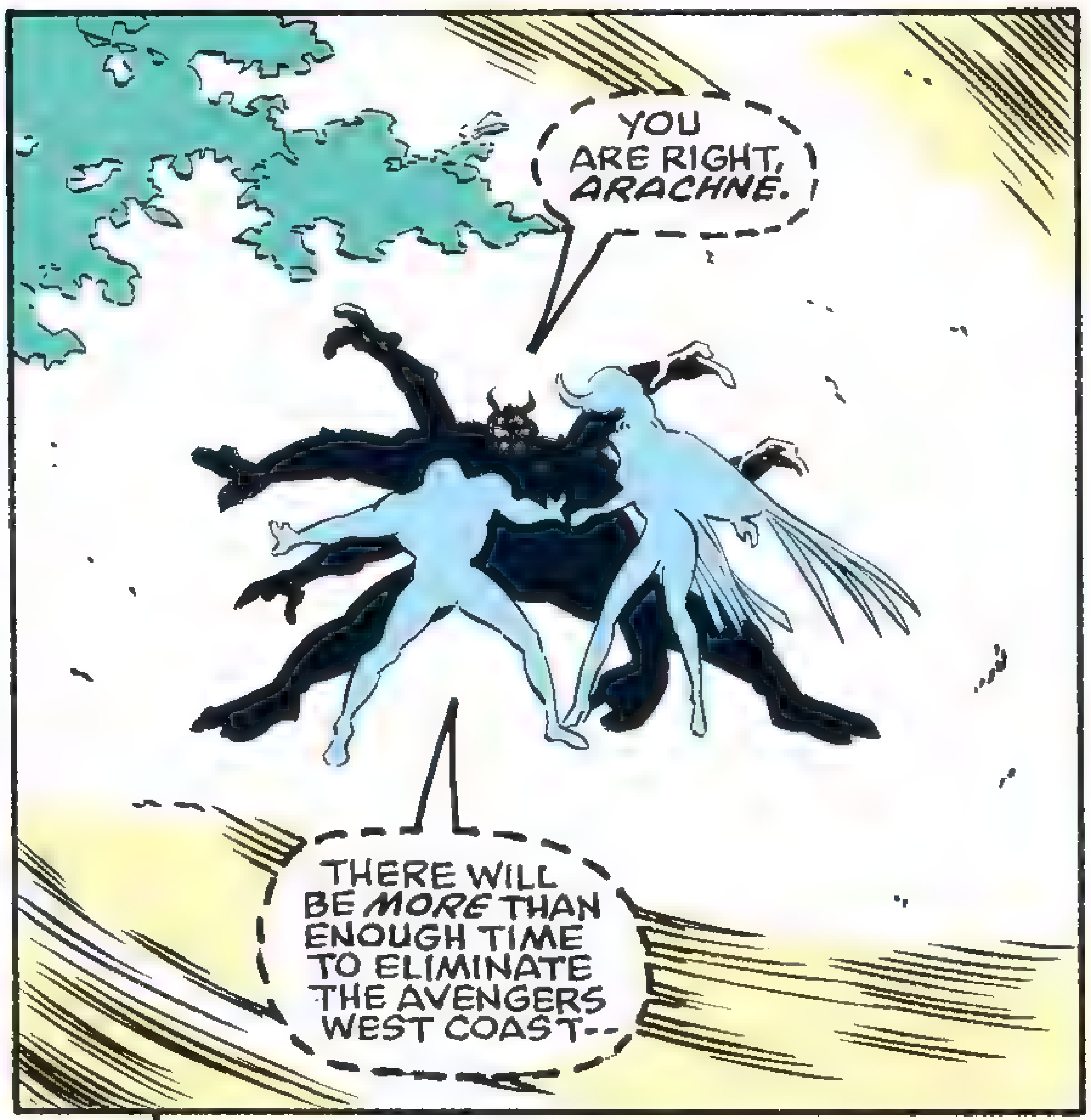

DID YOU, ULTIMUS?
YES, MAJESTRIX SHI'AR. AND THOUGH I HAVE NO MORE LOVE FOR YOUR WORLD THAN YOU HAVE FOR MINE--
--I CONCEDE THAT THIS POINTS UP THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SKRULLS MAY HAVE STIRRED UP THE PRESENT TROUBLE BETWEEN US.
"MAY HAVE"?
THE SKRULLS ARE THE KREE'S AGE-OLD FOES, TITAN.
COMPARED TO THE BAD FEELING BETWEEN OUR GALAXIES, THE ENMITY BETWEEN KREE AND SHI'AR IS BUT A FLOWER IN EARLY BLOOM.
STILL, THE CHOICE OF WAR OR PEACE IS NOT MINE TO MAKE.
BUT, IF YOU WILL PERMIT ME, I WILL RETURN TO OUR HOMEWORLD, AND REPORT WHAT HAPPENED HERE.
I ASK NO MORE-- THOUGH OF COURSE IN THE MEANTIME I SHALL HOLD THE REST OF STARFORCE HERE AS HOSTAGES.
AS WE WOULD DO, WERE THE SITUATION REVERSED.
GO, THEN--BUT TELL THE KREE THAT THERE IS ONE FACTOR WHICH MAY COMPLICATE ANY ATTEMPT AT PEACE BETWEEN US--
--ONE OF WHICH EVEN THE TERRANS ARE AS YET UNAWARE.
OH?
AND WHAT'S THAT?
THE NEGA-BOMB--
--HAS DISAPPEARED!

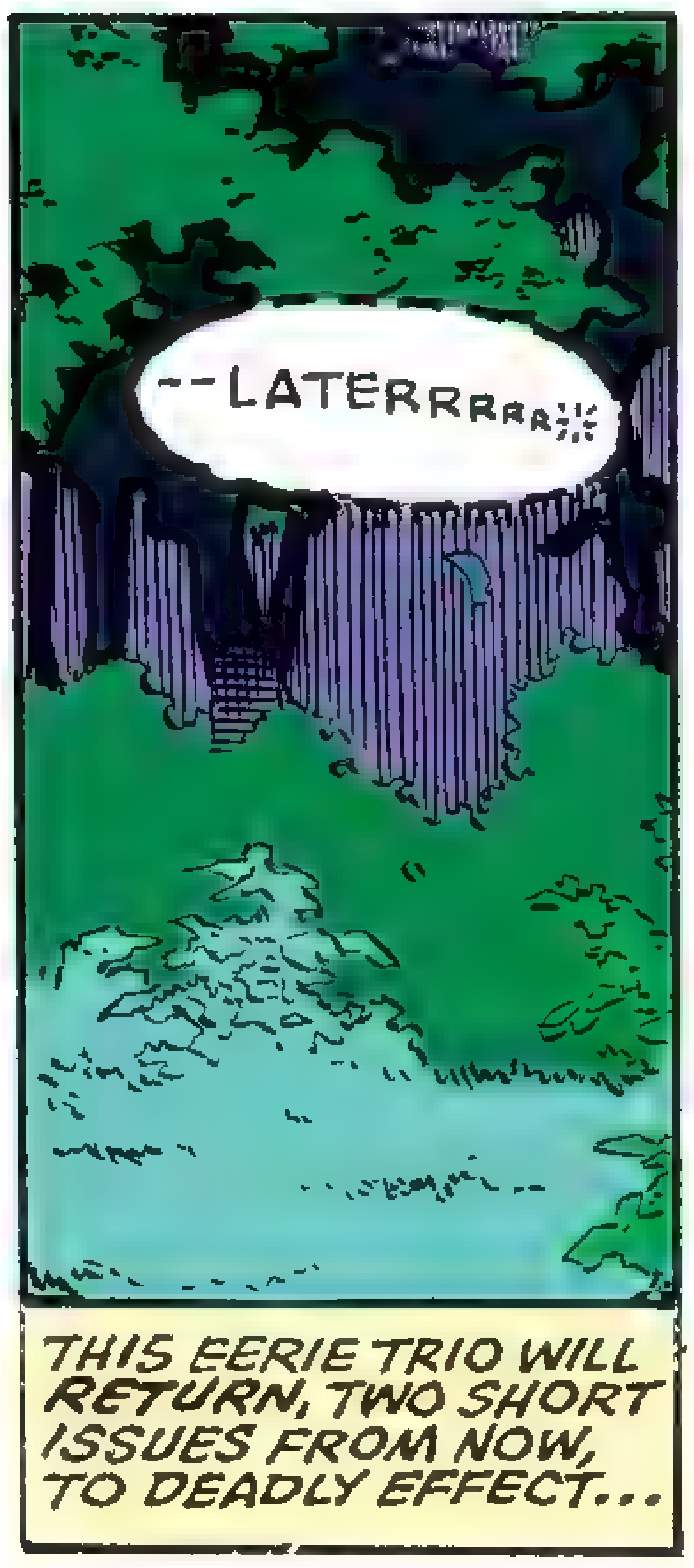

MEANWHILE (IF THAT TERM HAS ANY MEANING IN A UNIVERSE RULED BY RELATIVITY)...
...BACK ON THIS ISLAND EARTH...
...IN THE CLIFFS OF PALOS VERDES, CALIFORNIA, TO BE MORE PRECISE...
...A QUARTET OF AVENGERS COMES HOME TO ROOST.
THAT WAS OUR DEAL WITH HER, U.S. AGENT-- FOR HELPING US TRACK THE SHI'AR STARSHIP.*
I STILL DON'T LIKE IT, PEOPLE--
--LETTING THAT KREE, DR. MINERVA, GO!
AND WITH HER GONE--
*LAST ISSUE. --NEL
--SHE-HULK AND THE OTHER EASTERS COULD HANDLE THE SHI'AR PRISONERS AT PROJECT: PEGASUS.
LET'S JUST HOPE WE'RE PROVED RIGHT IN RELEASING MINERVA, JAN.
SPI--I HEARD YOU SAY YOU HAD TO SPLIT. ME, TOO.
CAN I GIVE YOU A LIFT SOMEWHERE?
NO, THANKS, AGENT.
I FEEL LIKE TAKING A WALK BY MYSELF, OKAY?
FREE COUNTRY. THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN THAT AWAY FROM US YET, ANYWAY.

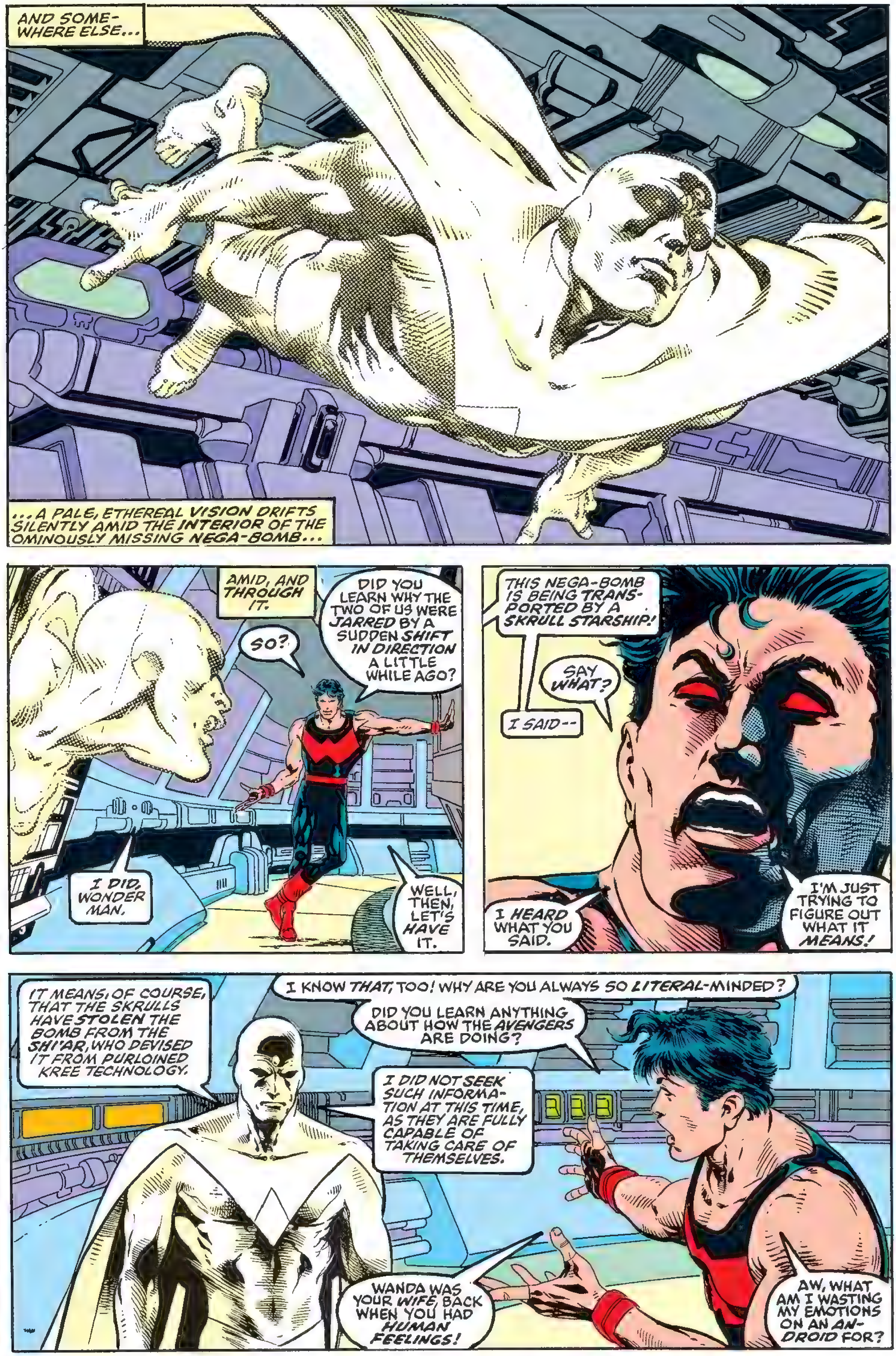

I JUST COULDN'T *BEAR* BEING WITH THE OTHERS JUST NOW.
I KNOW I'M BEING *SELFISH,* WITH THE *WHOLE PLANET* FACING ANNIHILATION, IF THE AVENGERS DON'T STOP THOSE *SOLAR FLARES...*
BUT I KEEP THINKING--WHILE I'M PLAYING *SECOND-STRINGER* TO HEROES WHO ARE TRYING TO *SAVE THE WORLD--*
--WHAT ABOUT MY *DAUGHTER?*
EASY TO MAKE ME LOOK LIKE I *DON'T CARE* ABOUT HER--
LARRY'S GOT CUSTODY--AND HE KEEPS TRYING TO *POISON HER MIND* AGAINST ME.
--WHEN I'M BUSY PLAYING *SPIDER-WOMAN,* INSTEAD OF GOING TO SEE HER.
WHOA, JULIA! YOU CAN'T BLAME *EVERYTHING* ON LARRY--OR EVEN ON PLAYING *SUPER HEROINE.*
GIVE RACHEL A LITTLE *CREDIT,* OKAY?
SHE KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOUR *DOUBLE IDENTITY*--SO SHE CAN *GUESS* YOU'RE WITH THE *AVENGERS WEST.*
BESIDES, IF YOU SAVE THE EARTH--YOU SAVE *RACHEL,* TOO, RIGHT?
MAYBE YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO FACE THE FACT THAT, IF YOU LOSE YOUR DAUGHTER'S LOVE--
--IT'S ALL YOUR *OWN* FAULT, AND NOBODY ELSE'S!
IF SHE *SAW* US--!

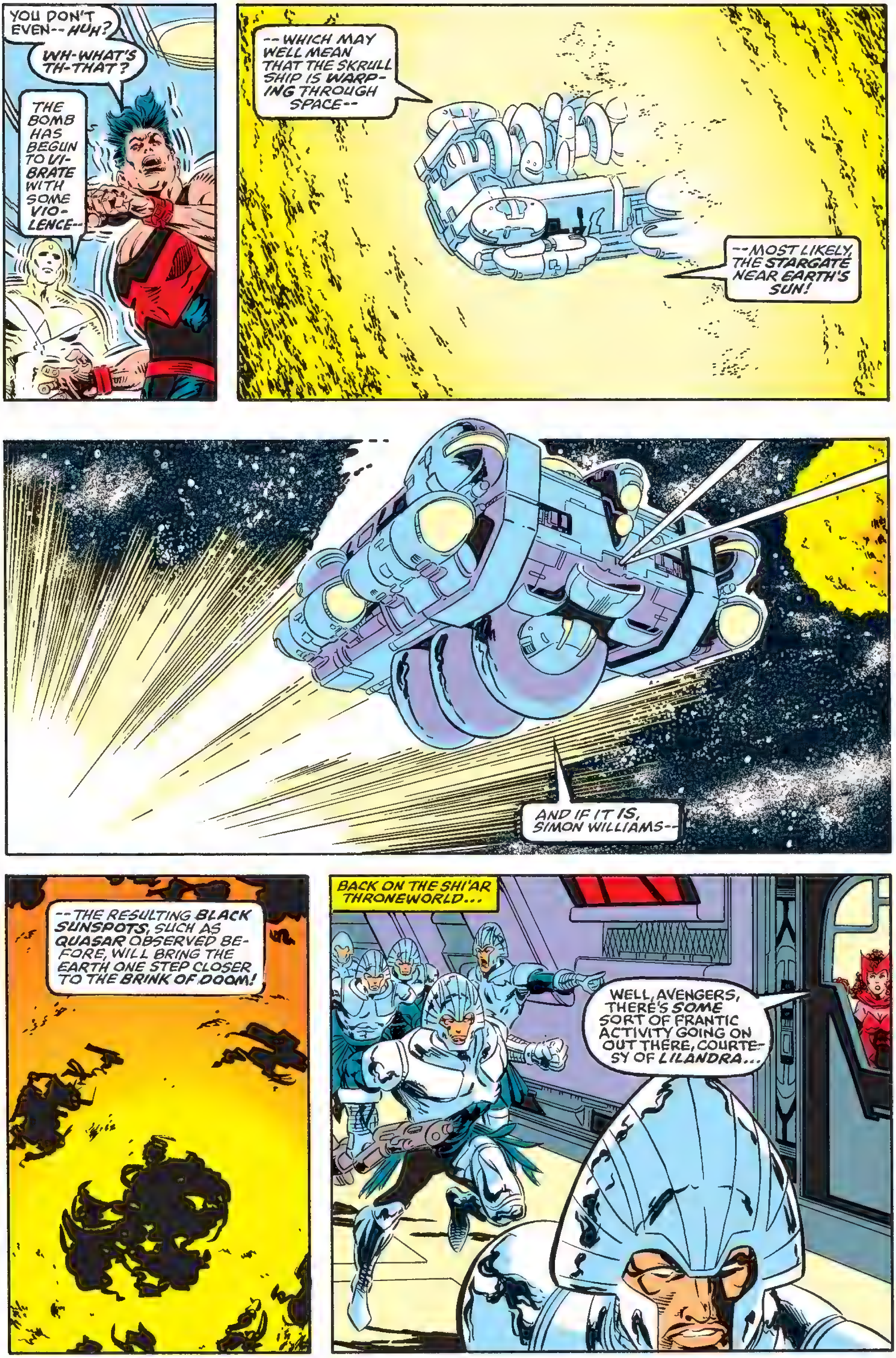

EASY, *THERAK!*
CLEARLY, SPIDER-WOMAN WAS FAR TOO LOST IN HER OWN THOUGHTS--WHATEVER THEY WERE--TO NOTICE US.
MAYBE--BUT WOULD'A BEEN *EASY* TO KILL HER--
--*REAL* EASY!
BUT WE DIDN'T *COME* HERE TO KILL HER.
NOT *TONIGHT,* ANYWAY.
WE ONLY CAME...TO *OBSERVE.*

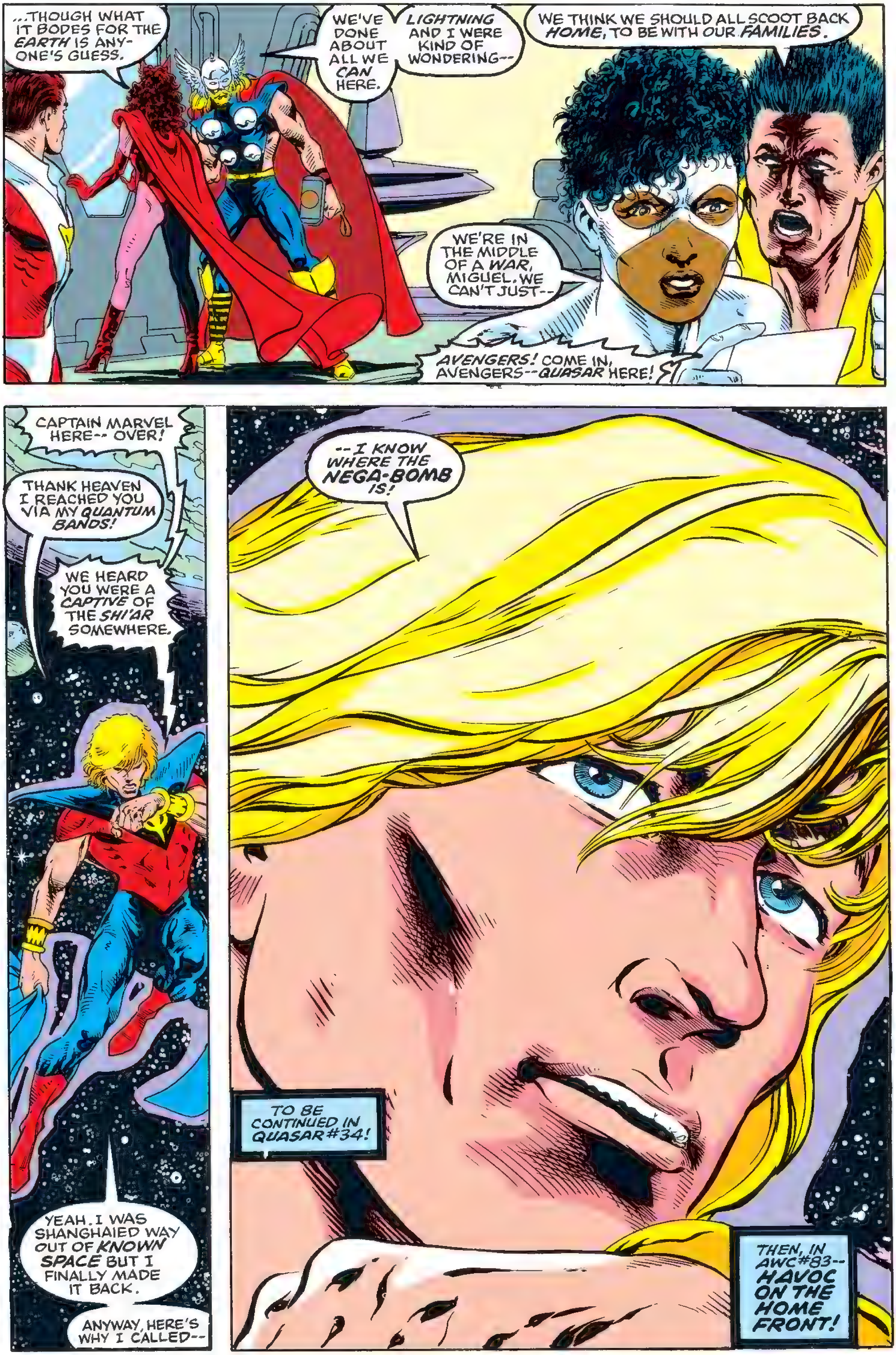

NOW, *ANTRO*--
TRAPDOOR US AWAY FROM HERE!


YOU ARE RIGHT, *ARACHNE.*
THERE WILL BE *MORE* THAN ENOUGH TIME TO ELIMINATE THE AVENGERS WEST COAST--


--LATERRRRR!
THIS EERIE TRIO WILL ***RETURN,*** *TWO SHORT ISSUES FROM NOW, TO DEADLY EFFECT...*


AND SOME-WHERE ELSE...
...A PALE, ETHEREAL VISION DRIFTS SILENTLY AMID THE INTERIOR OF THE OMINOUSLY MISSING NEGA-BOMB...
AMID, AND THROUGH IT.
SO?
DID YOU LEARN WHY THE TWO OF US WERE JARRED BY A SUDDEN SHIFT IN DIRECTION A LITTLE WHILE AGO?
I DID, WONDER MAN.
WELL, THEN, LET'S HAVE IT.
THIS NEGA-BOMB IS BEING TRANSPORTED BY A SKRULL STARSHIP!
SAY WHAT?
I SAID--
I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID.
I'M JUST TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IT MEANS!
IT MEANS, OF COURSE, THAT THE SKRULLS HAVE STOLEN THE BOMB FROM THE SHI'AR, WHO DEVISED IT FROM PURLOINED KREE TECHNOLOGY.
I KNOW THAT, TOO! WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SO LITERAL-MINDED?
DID YOU LEARN ANYTHING ABOUT HOW THE AVENGERS ARE DOING?
I DID NOT SEEK SUCH INFORMATION AT THIS TIME, AS THEY ARE FULLY CAPABLE OF TAKING CARE OF THEMSELVES.
WANDA WAS YOUR WIFE, BACK WHEN YOU HAD HUMAN FEELINGS!
AW, WHAT AM I WASTING MY EMOTIONS ON AN ANDROID FOR?


YOU DON'T EVEN-- HUH?
WH-WHAT'S TH-THAT?
THE BOMB HAS BEGUN TO VIBRATE WITH SOME VIOLENCE--
--WHICH MAY WELL MEAN THAT THE SKRULL SHIP IS WARPING THROUGH SPACE--
--MOST LIKELY, THE STARGATE NEAR EARTH'S SUN!
AND IF IT IS, SIMON WILLIAMS--
--THE RESULTING BLACK SUNSPOTS, SUCH AS QUASAR OBSERVED BEFORE, WILL BRING THE EARTH ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE BRINK OF DOOM!
BACK ON THE SHI'AR THRONEWORLD...
WELL, AVENGERS, THERE'S SOME SORT OF FRANTIC ACTIVITY GOING ON OUT THERE, COURTESY OF LILANDRA...


...THOUGH WHAT IT BODES FOR THE *EARTH* IS ANYONE'S GUESS.
WE'VE DONE ABOUT ALL WE *CAN* HERE.
LIGHTNING AND I WERE KIND OF WONDERING--
WE THINK WE SHOULD ALL SCOOT BACK *HOME*, TO BE WITH OUR *FAMILIES*.
WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A *WAR*, MIGUEL. WE CAN'T JUST--
AVENGERS! COME IN, AVENGERS--*QUASAR* HERE!
CAPTAIN MARVEL HERE-- OVER!
THANK HEAVEN I REACHED YOU VIA MY *QUANTUM BANDS!*
WE HEARD YOU WERE A *CAPTIVE* OF THE *SHI'AR* SOMEWHERE.
YEAH. I WAS SHANGHAIED WAY OUT OF *KNOWN SPACE* BUT I FINALLY MADE IT BACK.
ANYWAY, HERE'S WHY I CALLED--
--I KNOW WHERE THE *NEGA-BOMB* IS!
TO BE CONTINUED IN QUASAR #34!
THEN, IN AWC #83-- *HAVOC ON THE HOME FRONT!*

MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 17
QUASAR
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$1.25 US
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
FIRE IN THE SKY

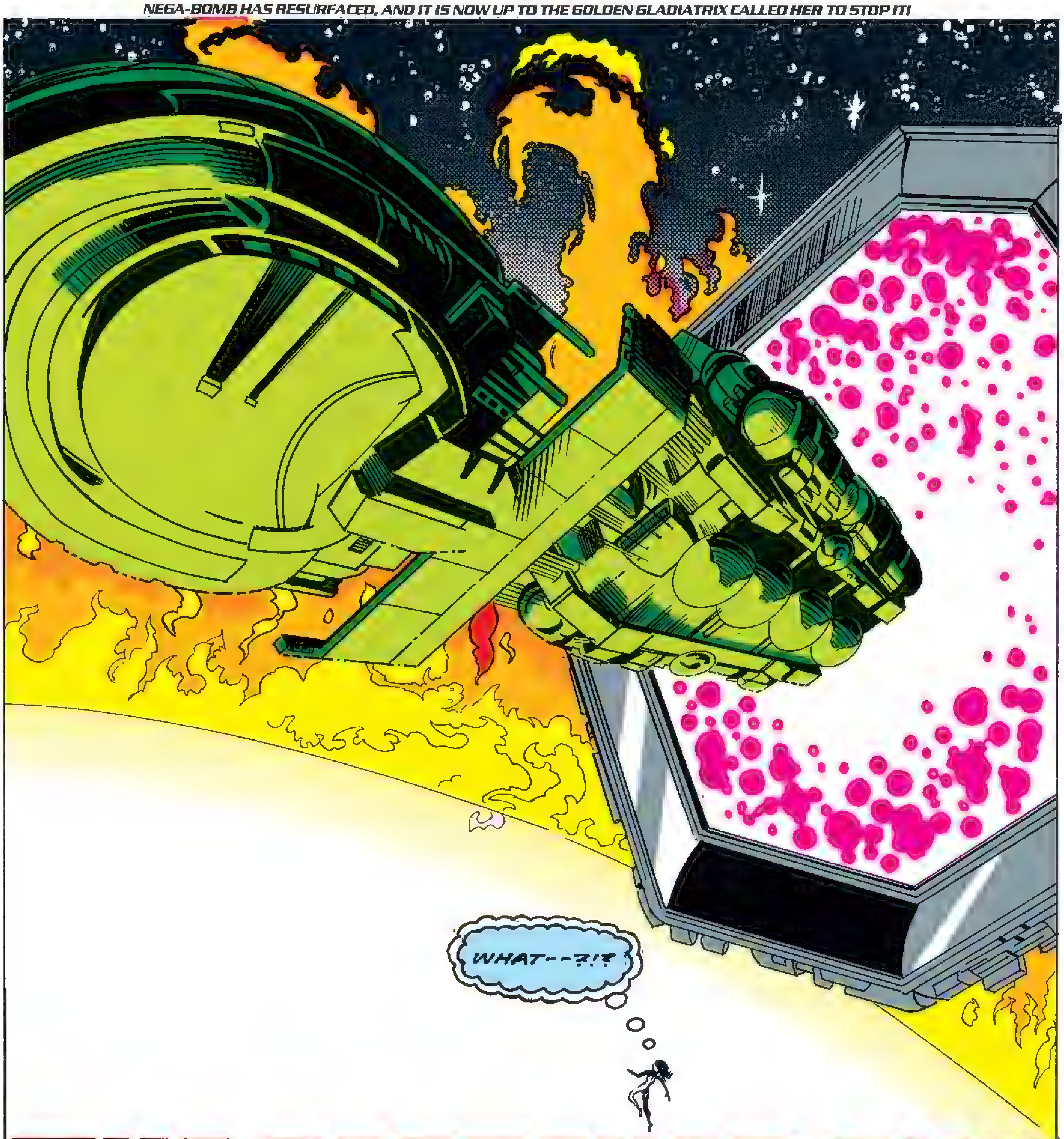
Stan Lee PRESENTS:

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

PART 17

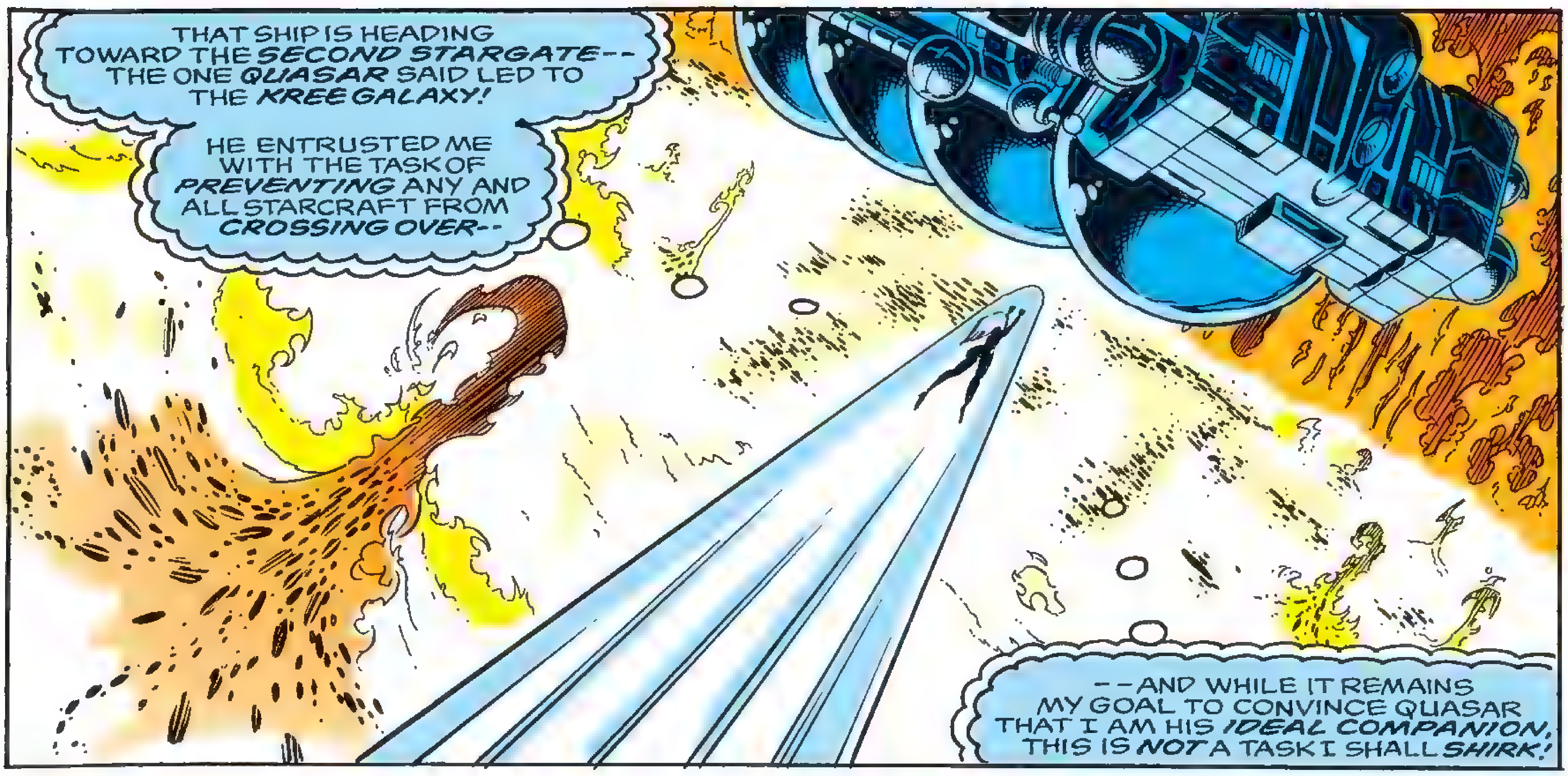
QUASAR

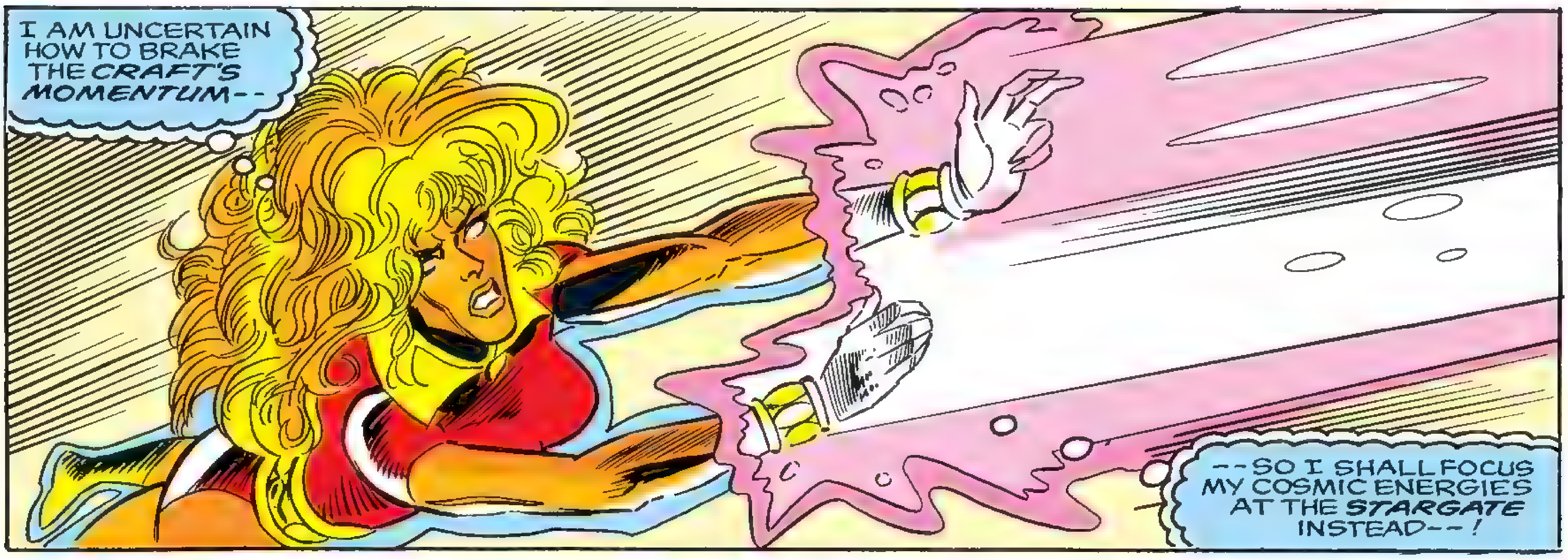
THE ALIEN **SHI'AR** HAVE CREATED A NEGA-BOMB TO DETONATE WITHIN THE EMPIRE OF THEIR ENEMIES, THE KREE. HOWEVER, THE BOMB WAS LOST IN TRANSIT. NOW, AT THE STARGATE NEAR EARTH'S SUN, THE NEGA-BOMB HAS RESURFACED, AND IT IS NOW UP TO THE GOLDEN GLADIATRIX CALLED HER TO STOP IT!

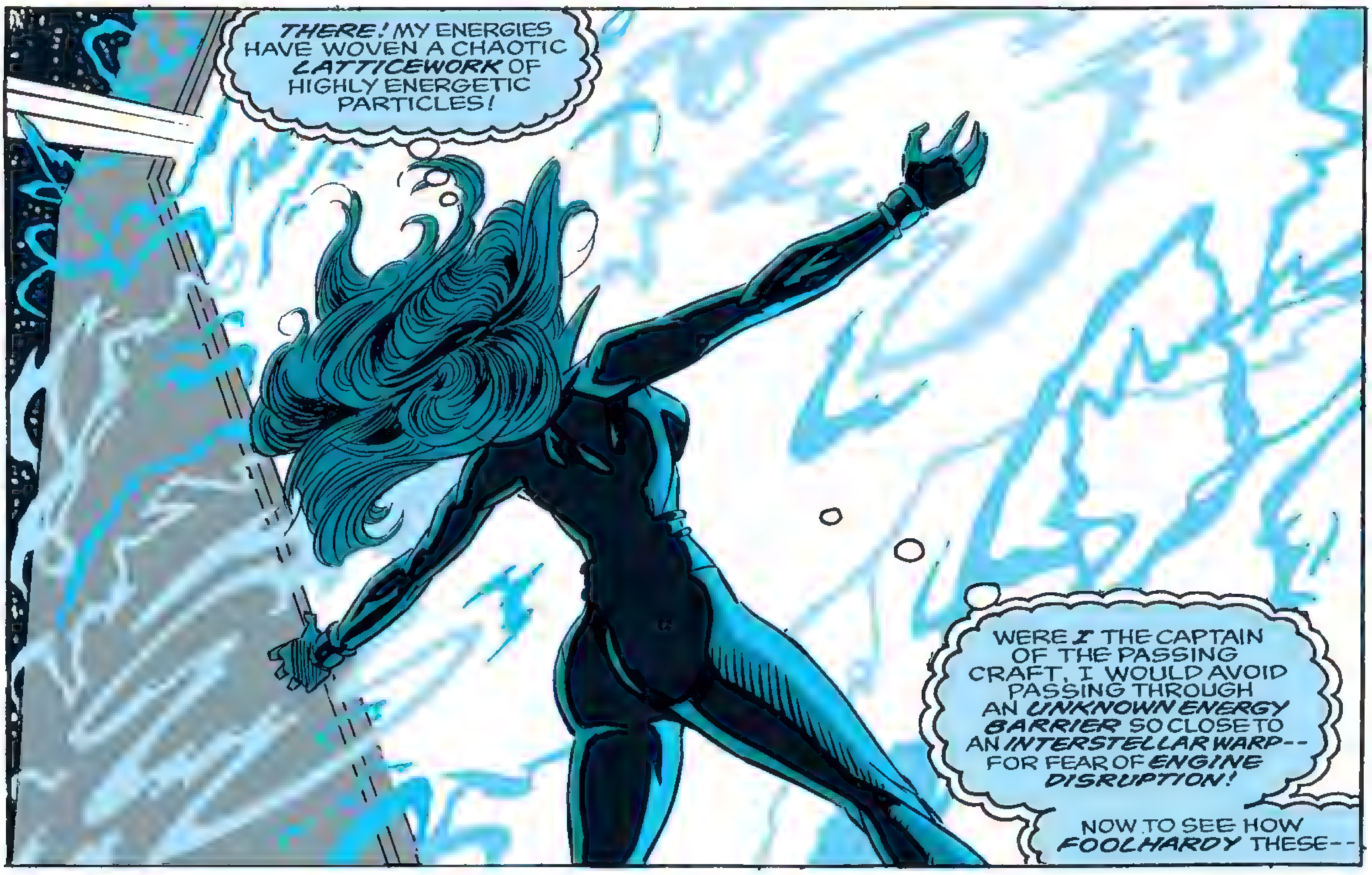


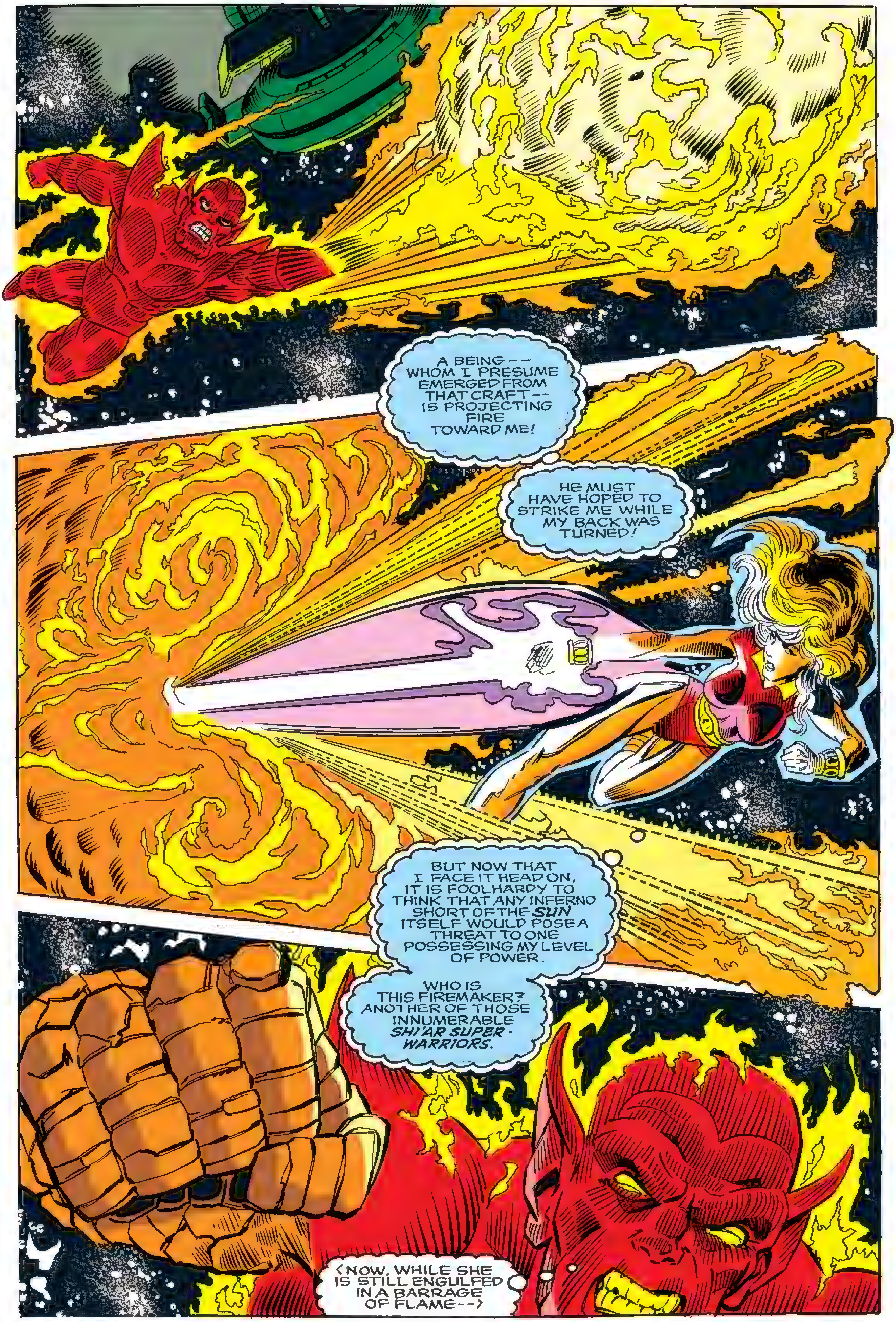
THE SCORCHED SUN

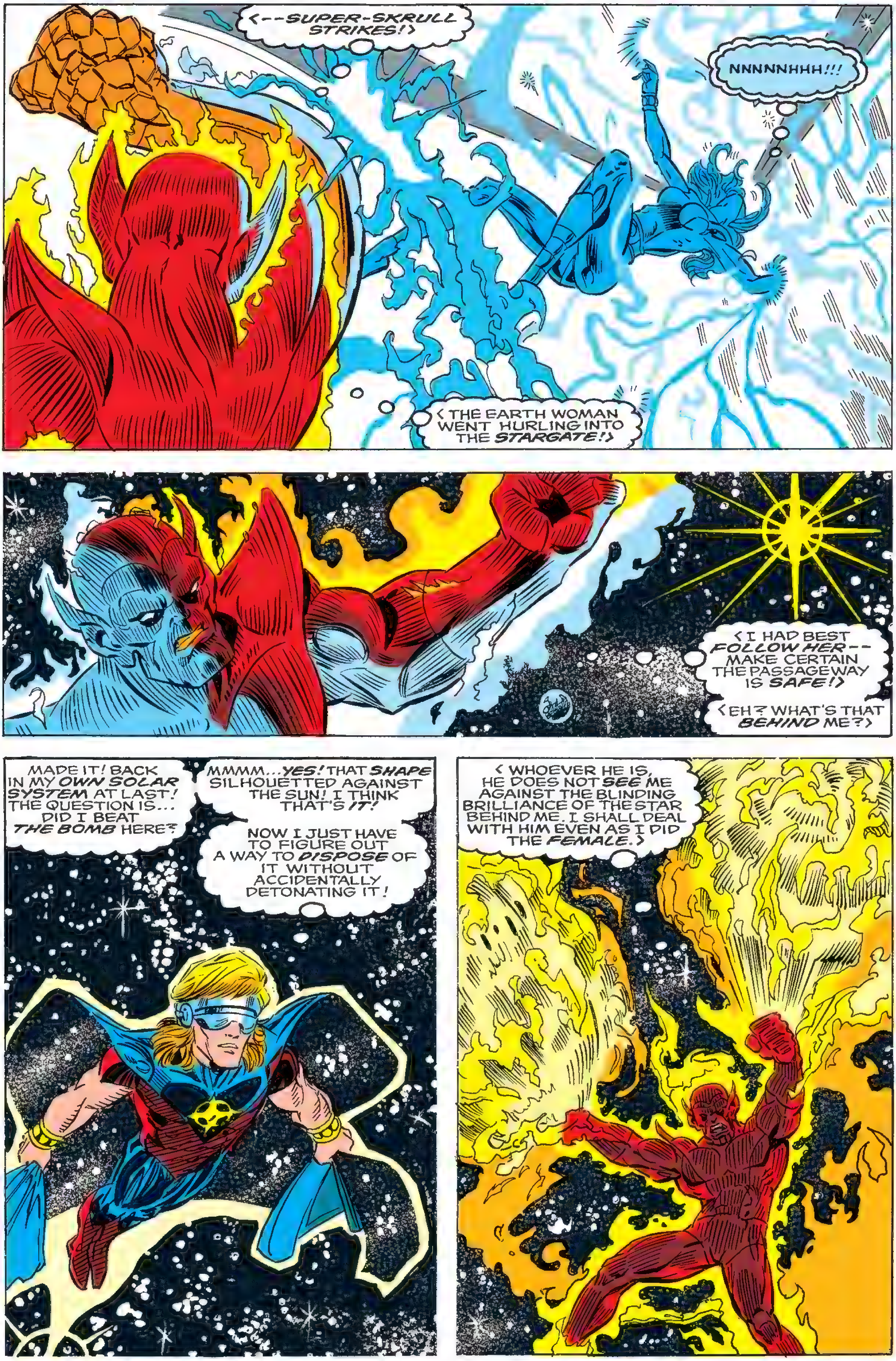
MARK GRUENWALD STORY • RURIK TYLER PENCILS • KEITH WILLIAMS INKS • JANICE CHIANG LETTERS • PAUL BECTON COLORS • KELLY CORVESE EDITOR • TOM DEFALCO SOLAR WIND

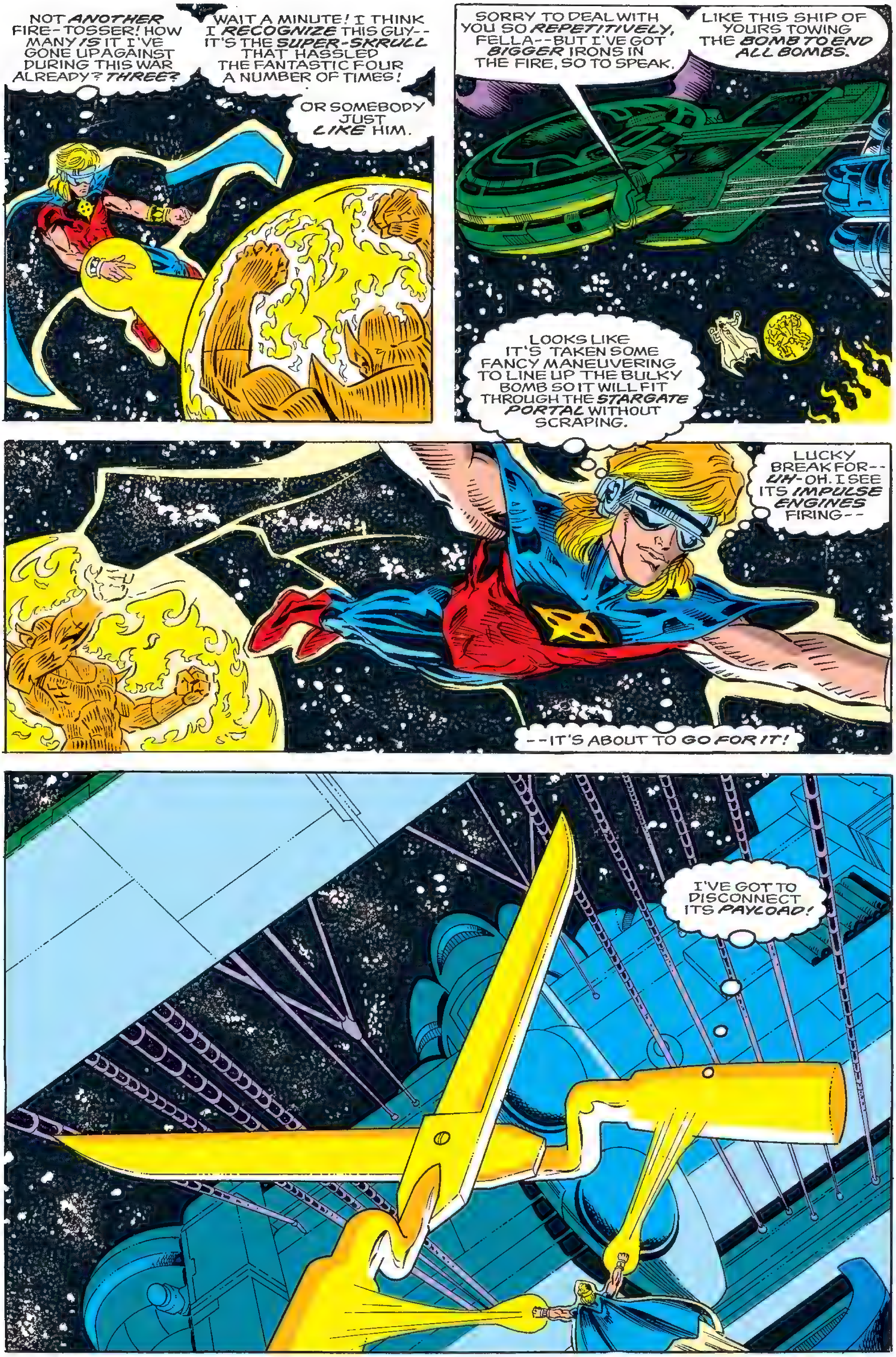

THAT SHIP IS HEADING TOWARD THE *SECOND STARGATE*-- THE ONE *QUASAR* SAID LED TO THE *KREE GALAXY!*
HE ENTRUSTED ME WITH THE TASK OF *PREVENTING* ANY AND ALL STARCRAFT FROM *CROSSING OVER*--
--AND WHILE IT REMAINS MY GOAL TO CONVINCE QUASAR THAT I AM HIS *IDEAL COMPANION,* THIS IS *NOT* A TASK I SHALL *SHIRK!*

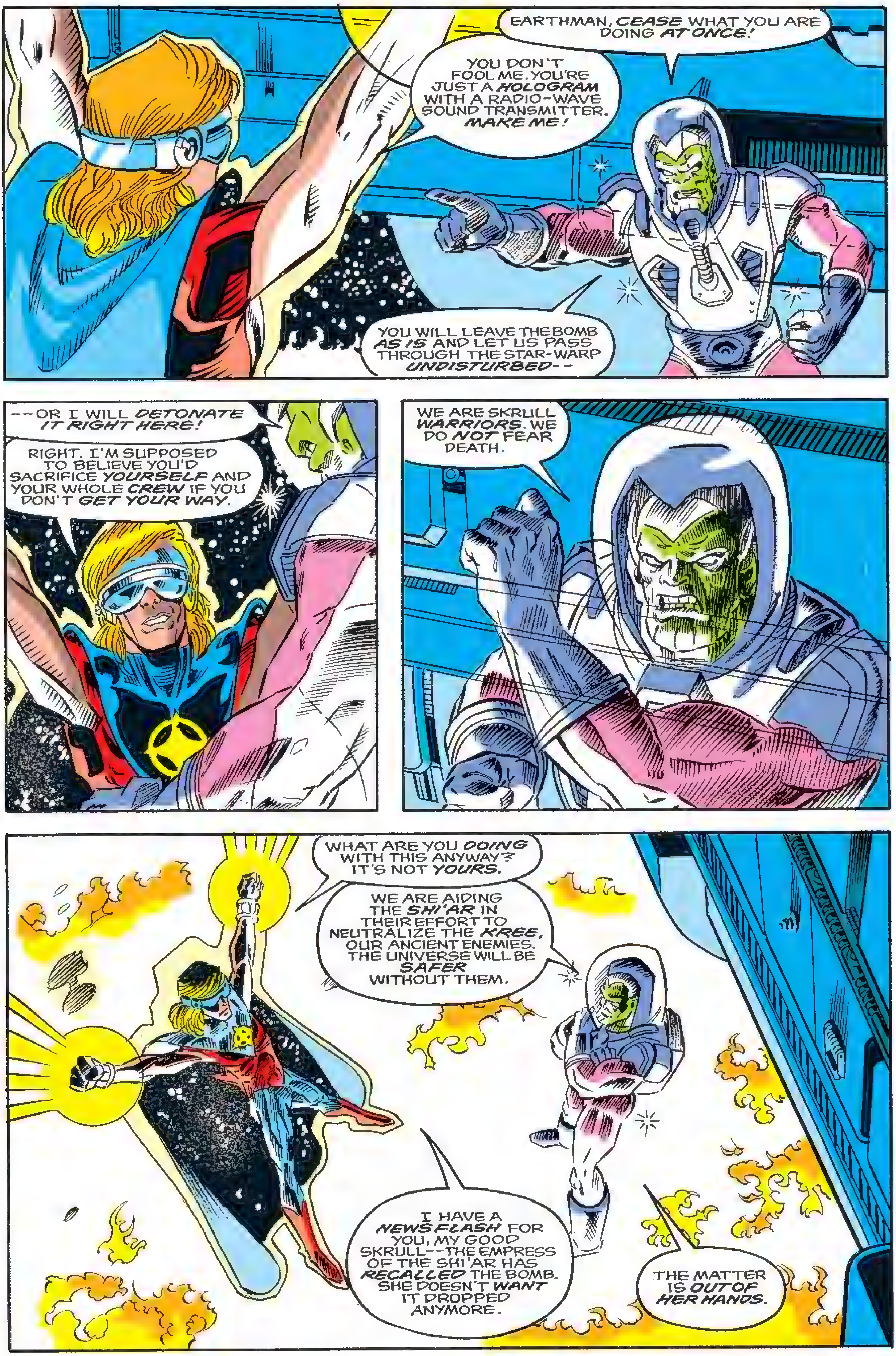

I AM UNCERTAIN HOW TO BRAKE THE *CRAFT'S MOMENTUM*--
--SO I SHALL FOCUS MY COSMIC ENERGIES AT THE *STARGATE* INSTEAD--!

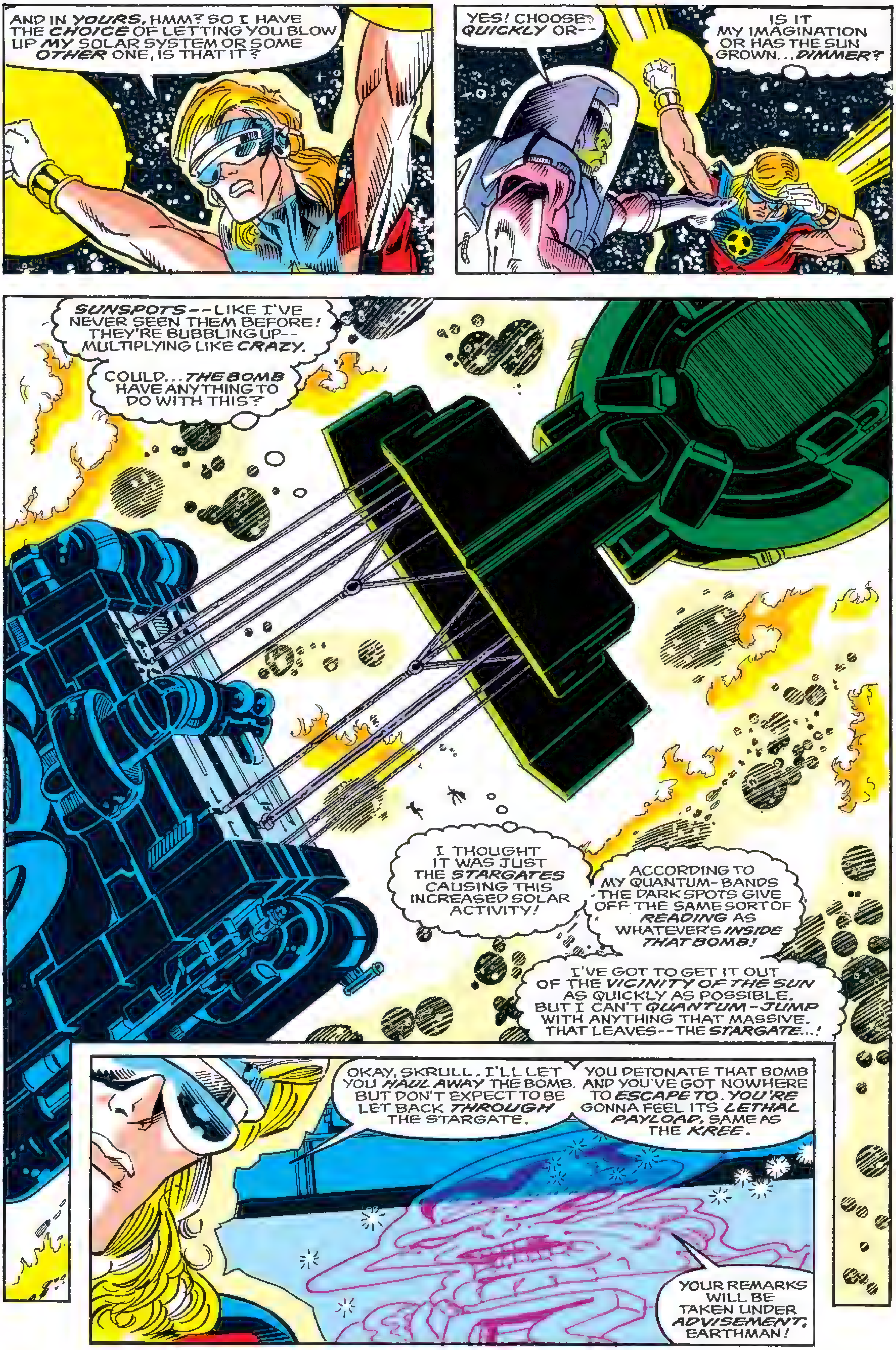

THERE! MY ENERGIES HAVE WOVEN A CHAOTIC *LATTICEWORK* OF HIGHLY ENERGETIC PARTICLES!
WERE *I* THE CAPTAIN OF THE PASSING CRAFT, I WOULD AVOID PASSING THROUGH AN *UNKNOWN ENERGY BARRIER* SO CLOSE TO AN *INTERSTELLAR WARP*-- FOR FEAR OF *ENGINE DISRUPTION!*
NOW TO SEE HOW *FOOLHARDY* THESE--

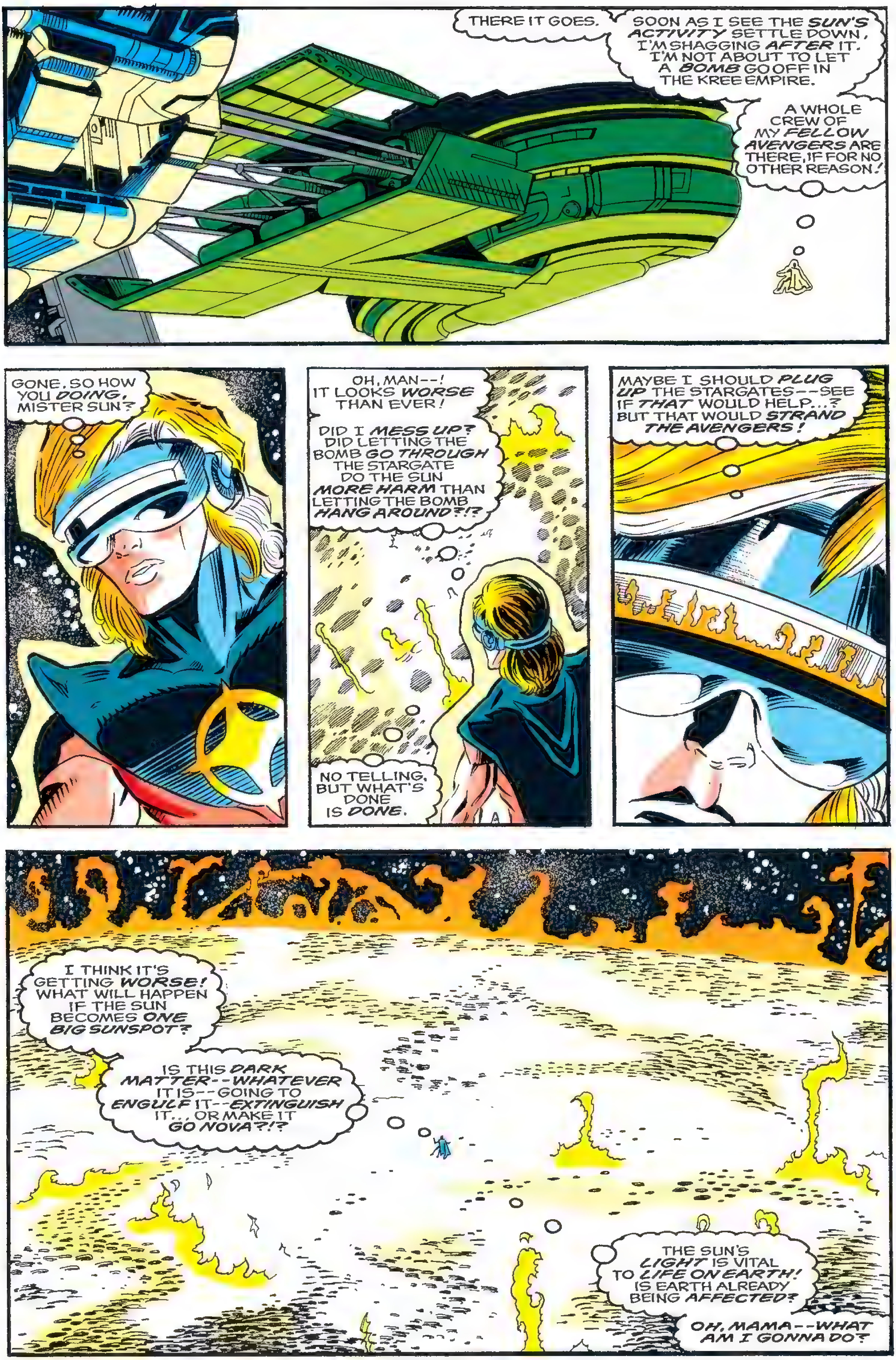

A BEING-- WHOM I PRESUME EMERGED FROM THAT CRAFT-- IS PROJECTING FIRE TOWARD ME!
HE MUST HAVE HOPED TO STRIKE ME WHILE MY BACK WAS TURNED!
BUT NOW THAT I FACE IT HEAD ON, IT IS FOOLHARDY TO THINK THAT ANY INFERNO SHORT OF THE *SUN* ITSELF WOULD POSE A THREAT TO ONE POSSESSING MY LEVEL OF POWER.
WHO IS THIS FIREMAKER? ANOTHER OF THOSE INNUMERABLE *SHI'AR SUPER-WARRIORS.*
‹NOW, WHILE SHE IS STILL ENGULFED IN A BARRAGE OF FLAME--›

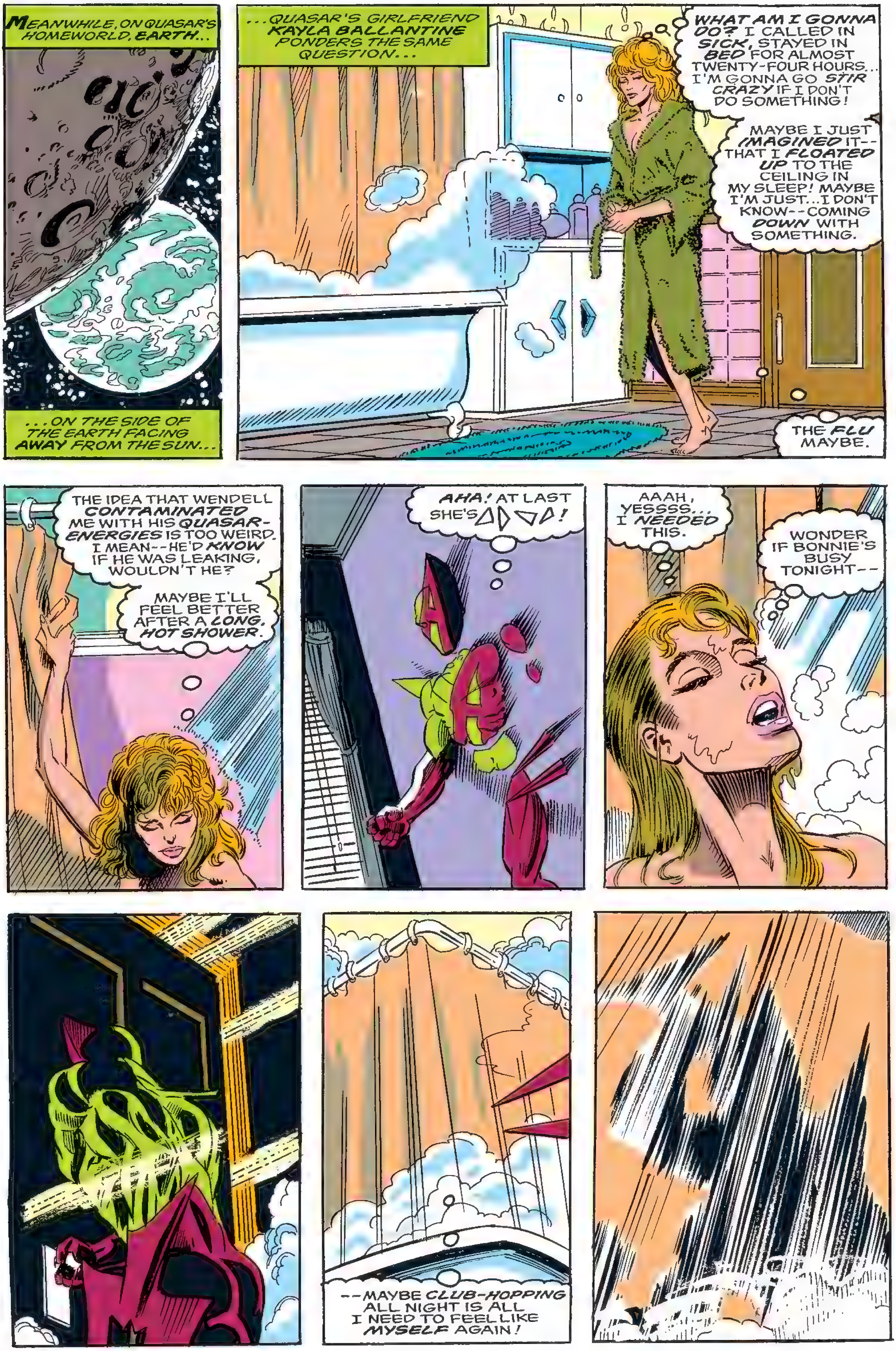

<--SUPER-SKRULL STRIKES!>
NNNNNHHH!!!
<THE EARTH WOMAN WENT HURLING INTO THE STARGATE!>
<I HAD BEST FOLLOW HER--MAKE CERTAIN THE PASSAGEWAY IS SAFE!>
<EH? WHAT'S THAT BEHIND ME?>
MADE IT! BACK IN MY OWN SOLAR SYSTEM AT LAST! THE QUESTION IS... DID I BEAT THE BOMB HERE?
MMMM...YES! THAT SHAPE SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE SUN! I THINK THAT'S IT!
NOW I JUST HAVE TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO DISPOSE OF IT WITHOUT ACCIDENTALLY DETONATING IT!
< WHOEVER HE IS, HE DOES NOT SEE ME AGAINST THE BLINDING BRILLIANCE OF THE STAR BEHIND ME. I SHALL DEAL WITH HIM EVEN AS I DID THE FEMALE.>

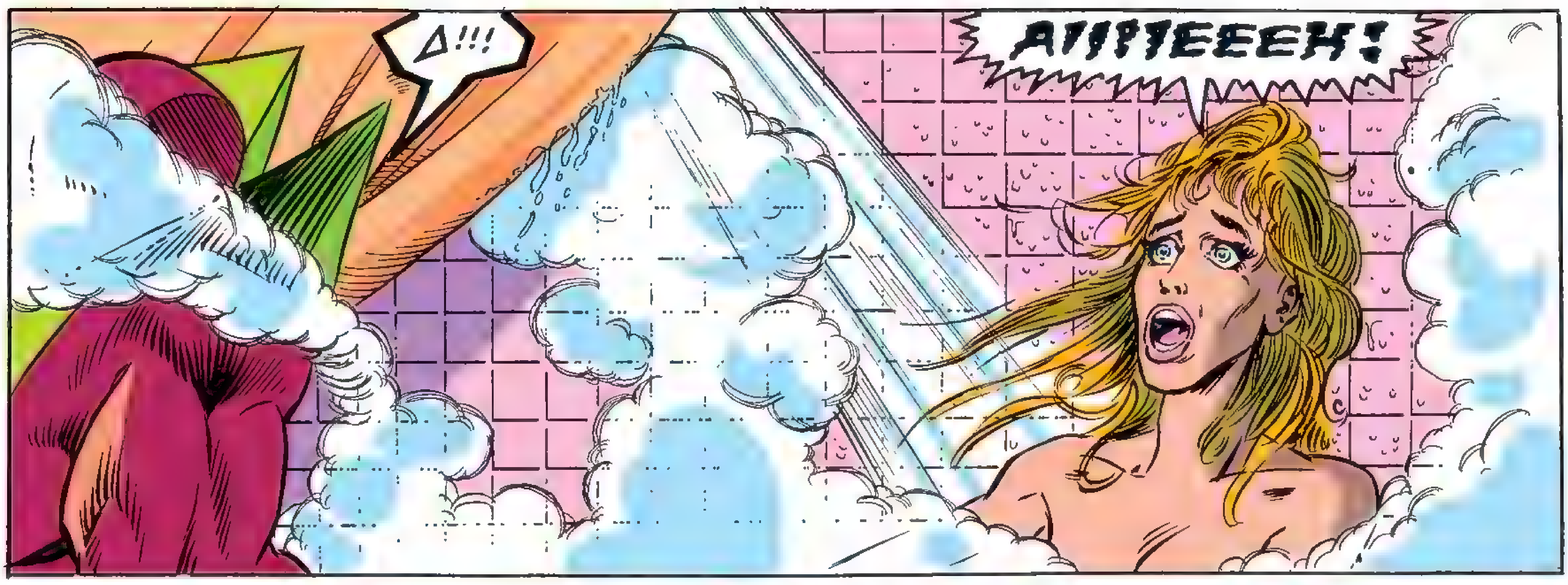

NOT *ANOTHER* FIRE-TOSSER! HOW MANY *IS* IT I'VE GONE UP AGAINST DURING THIS WAR ALREADY? *THREE?*
WAIT A MINUTE! I THINK I *RECOGNIZE* THIS GUY-- IT'S THE *SUPER-SKRULL* THAT HASSLED THE FANTASTIC FOUR A NUMBER OF TIMES!
OR SOMEBODY JUST *LIKE* HIM.
SORRY TO DEAL WITH YOU SO *REPETITIVELY*, FELLA--BUT I'VE GOT *BIGGER* IRONS IN THE FIRE, SO TO SPEAK.
LIKE THIS SHIP OF YOURS TOWING THE *BOMB TO END ALL BOMBS.*
LOOKS LIKE IT'S TAKEN SOME FANCY MANEUVERING TO LINE UP THE BULKY BOMB SO IT WILL FIT THROUGH THE *STARGATE PORTAL* WITHOUT SCRAPING.
LUCKY BREAK FOR-- *UH*-OH. I SEE ITS *IMPULSE ENGINES* FIRING--
--IT'S ABOUT TO GO *FOR IT!*
I'VE GOT TO DISCONNECT ITS *PAYLOAD!*

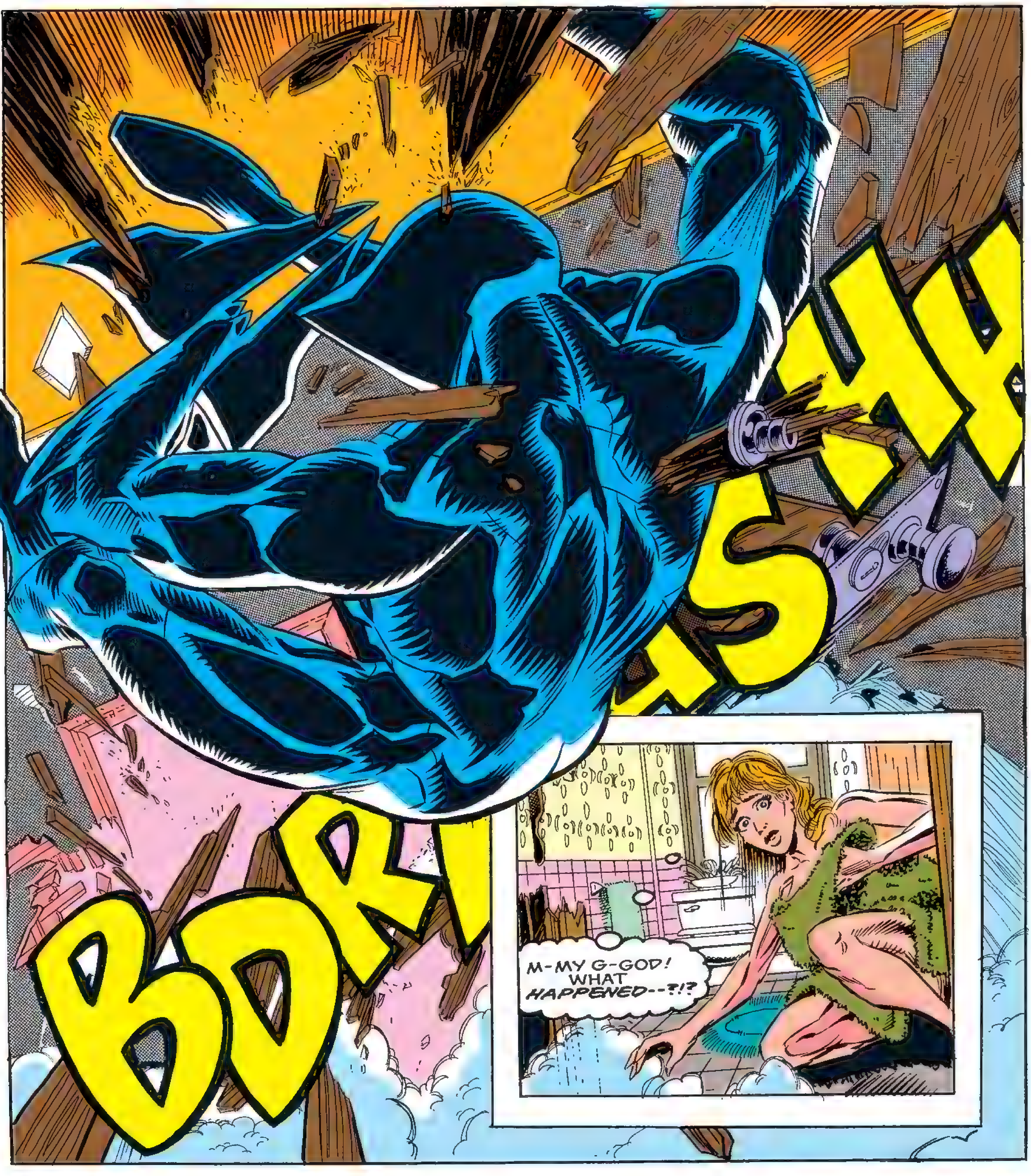

EARTHMAN, *CEASE* WHAT YOU ARE DOING *AT ONCE!*
YOU DON'T FOOL ME. YOU'RE JUST A *HOLOGRAM* WITH A RADIO-WAVE SOUND TRANSMITTER. *MAKE ME!*
YOU WILL LEAVE THE BOMB *AS IS* AND LET US PASS THROUGH THE STAR-WARP *UNDISTURBED*--
--OR I WILL *DETONATE IT RIGHT HERE!*
RIGHT. I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE YOU'D SACRIFICE *YOURSELF* AND YOUR WHOLE *CREW* IF YOU DON'T *GET YOUR WAY.*
WE ARE SKRULL *WARRIORS*. WE DO *NOT* FEAR DEATH.
WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* WITH THIS ANYWAY? IT'S NOT *YOURS.*
WE ARE AIDING THE *SHI'AR* IN THEIR EFFORT TO NEUTRALIZE THE *KREE*, OUR ANCIENT ENEMIES. THE UNIVERSE WILL BE *SAFER* WITHOUT THEM.
I HAVE A *NEWS FLASH* FOR YOU, MY GOOD SKRULL--THE EMPRESS OF THE SHI'AR HAS *RECALLED* THE BOMB. SHE DOESN'T *WANT* IT DROPPED ANYMORE.
THE MATTER IS *OUT OF HER HANDS.*

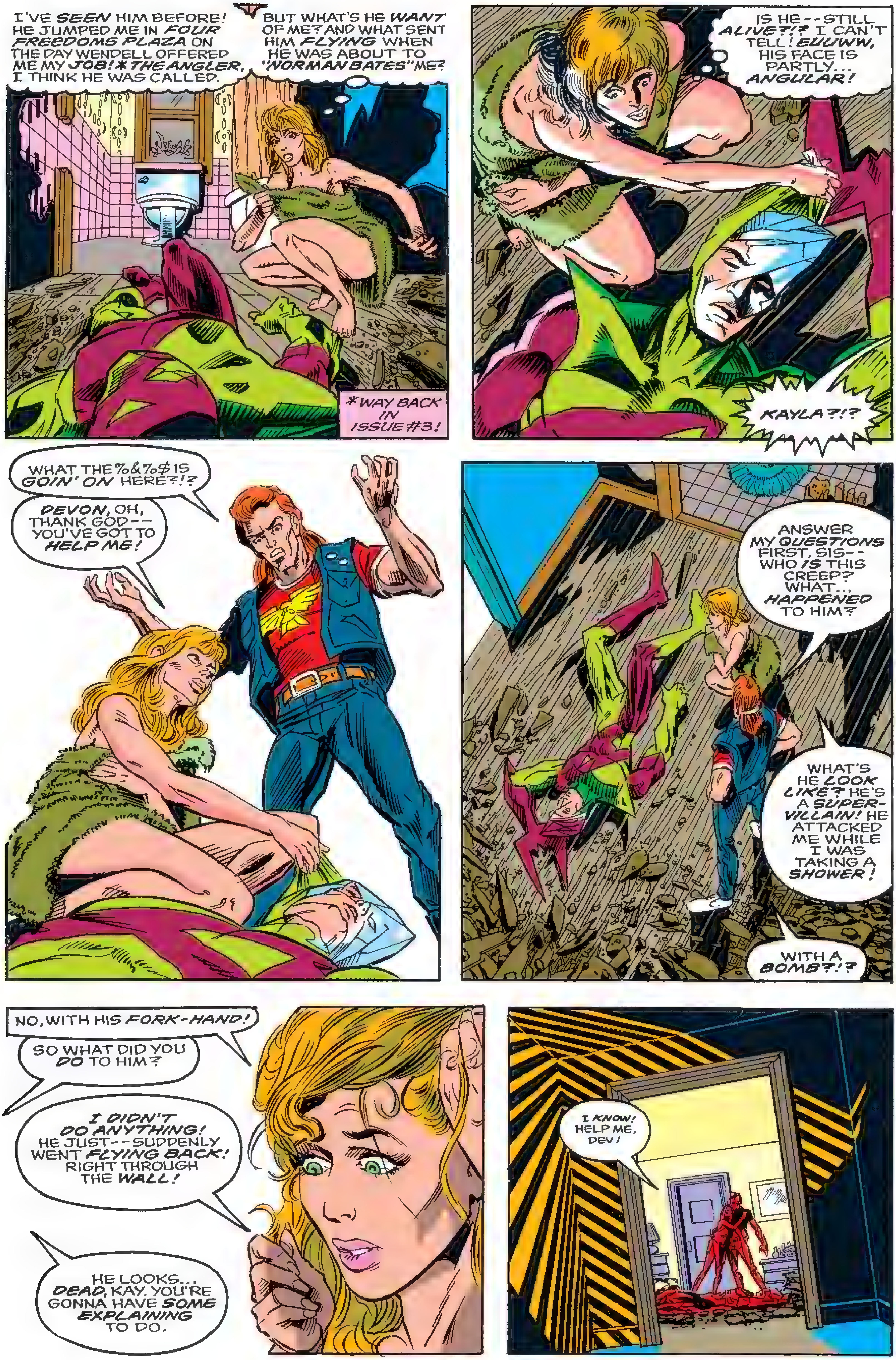

AND IN *YOURS*, HMM? SO I HAVE THE *CHOICE* OF LETTING YOU BLOW UP *MY* SOLAR SYSTEM OR SOME *OTHER* ONE, IS THAT IT?
YES! CHOOSE *QUICKLY* OR--
IS IT MY IMAGINATION OR HAS THE SUN GROWN... *DIMMER?*
SUNSPOTS--LIKE I'VE NEVER SEEN THEM BEFORE! THEY'RE BUBBLING UP-- MULTIPLYING LIKE *CRAZY*.
COULD... *THE BOMB* HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS?
I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST THE *STARGATES* CAUSING THIS INCREASED SOLAR ACTIVITY!
ACCORDING TO MY QUANTUM-BANDS - THE DARK SPOTS GIVE OFF THE SAME SORT OF *READING* AS WHATEVER'S *INSIDE THAT BOMB!*
I'VE GOT TO GET IT OUT OF THE *VICINITY OF THE SUN* AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. BUT I CAN'T *QUANTUM-JUMP* WITH ANYTHING THAT MASSIVE. THAT LEAVES--THE *STARGATE*...!
OKAY, SKRULL. I'LL LET YOU *HAUL AWAY* THE BOMB. BUT DON'T EXPECT TO BE LET BACK *THROUGH* THE STARGATE.
YOU DETONATE THAT BOMB AND YOU'VE GOT NOWHERE TO *ESCAPE TO*. *YOU'RE* GONNA FEEL ITS *LETHAL PAYLOAD*, SAME AS THE *KREE*.
YOUR REMARKS WILL BE TAKEN UNDER *ADVISEMENT*, EARTHMAN!

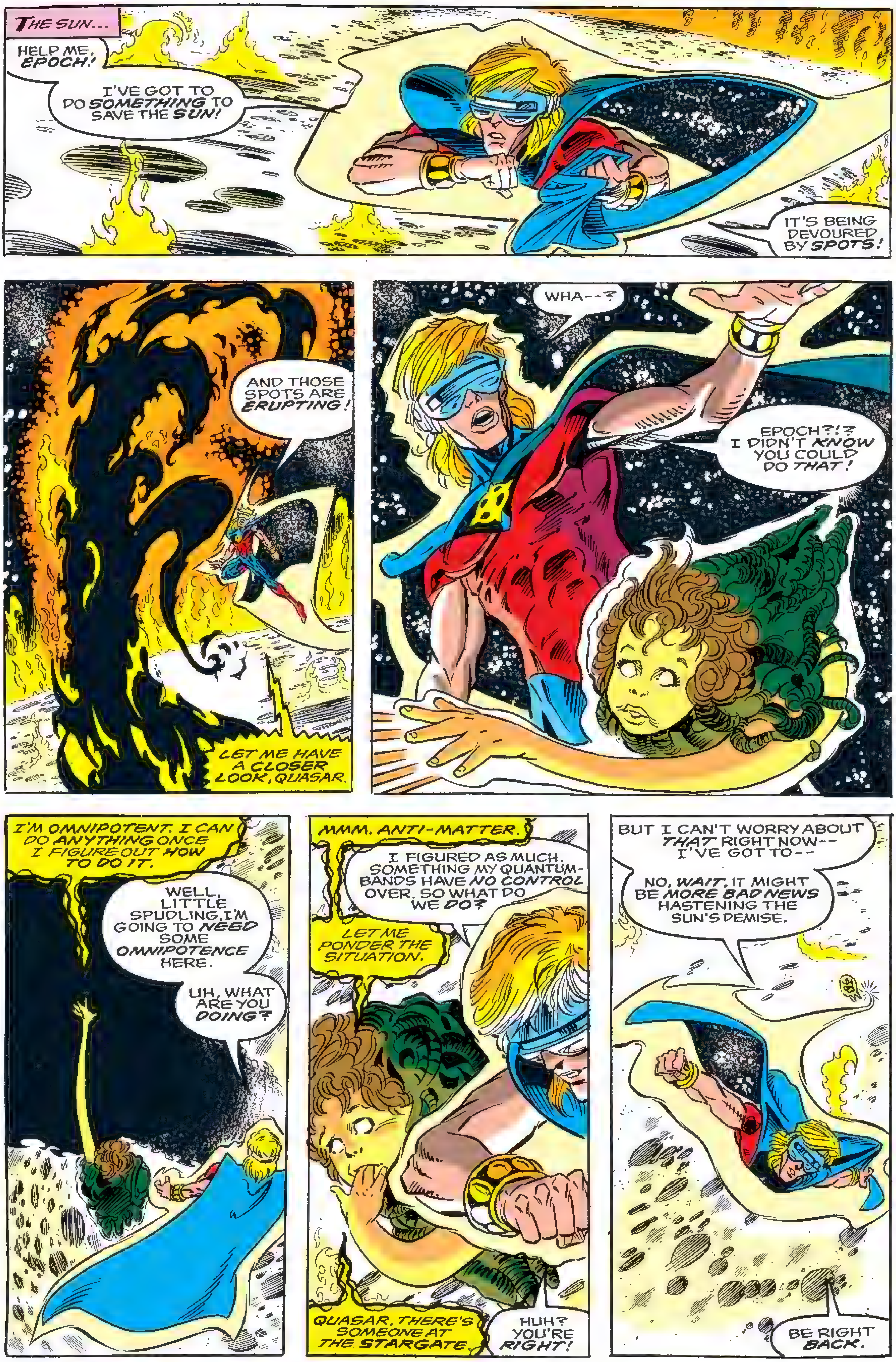

THERE IT GOES.
SOON AS I SEE THE *SUN'S ACTIVITY* SETTLE DOWN, I'M SHAGGING *AFTER* IT. I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET A *BOMB* GO OFF IN THE KREE EMPIRE.
A WHOLE CREW OF MY *FELLOW AVENGERS* ARE THERE, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON!
GONE. SO HOW YOU *DOING,* MISTER SUN?
OH, MAN--! IT LOOKS *WORSE* THAN EVER!
DID I *MESS UP?* DID LETTING THE BOMB *GO THROUGH* THE STARGATE DO THE SUN *MORE HARM* THAN LETTING THE BOMB *HANG AROUND?!?*
NO TELLING, BUT WHAT'S DONE IS *DONE*.
MAYBE I SHOULD *PLUG UP* THE STARGATES--SEE IF *THAT* WOULD HELP...? BUT THAT WOULD *STRAND THE AVENGERS!*
I THINK IT'S GETTING *WORSE!* WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE SUN BECOMES *ONE BIG SUNSPOT?*
IS THIS *DARK MATTER--WHATEVER* IT IS--GOING TO *ENGULF* IT--*EXTINGUISH* IT... OR MAKE IT *GO NOVA?!?*
THE SUN'S *LIGHT* IS VITAL TO *LIFE ON EARTH!* IS EARTH ALREADY BEING *AFFECTED?*
OH, MAMA--WHAT AM I GONNA DO?

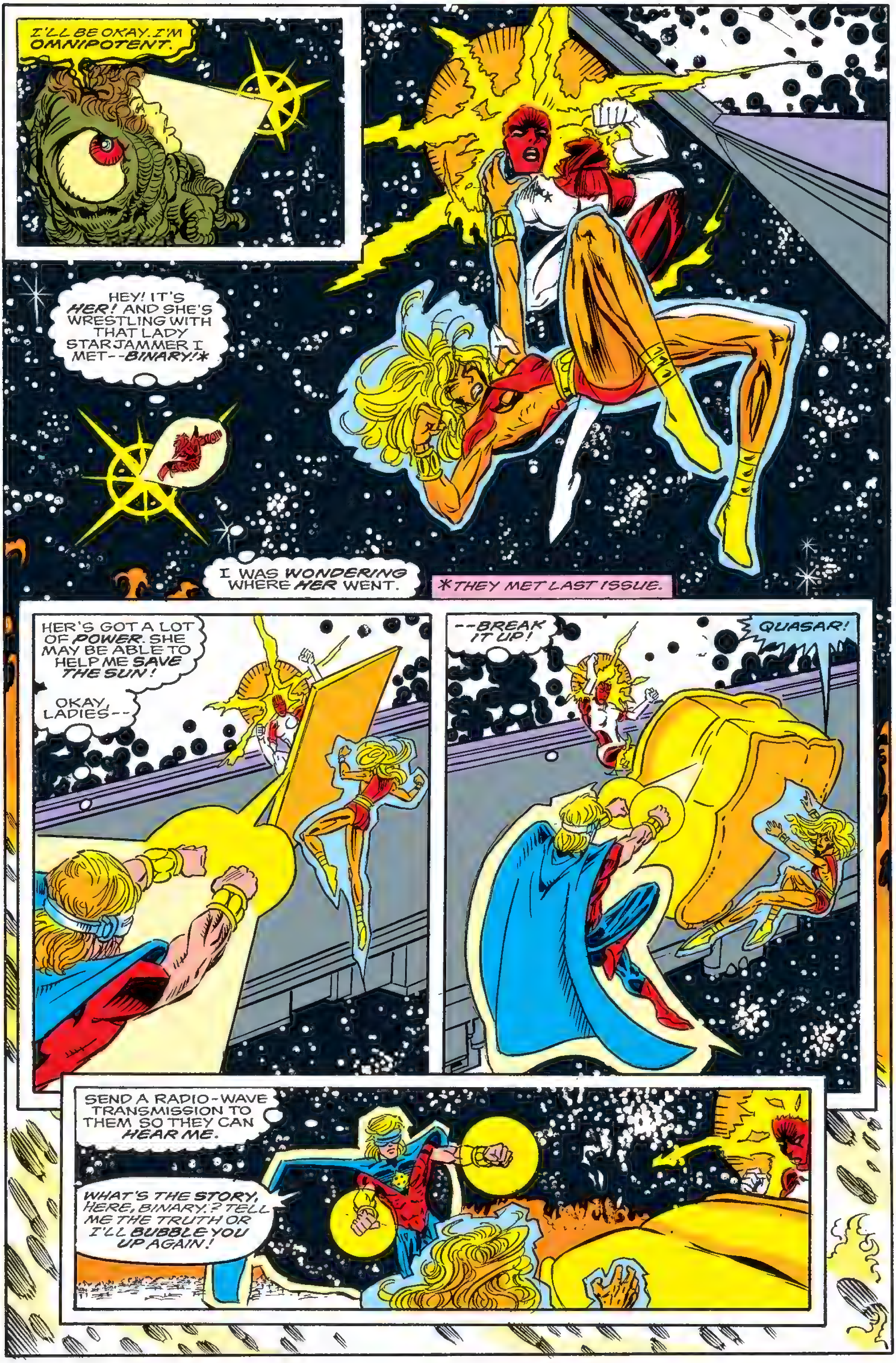

MEANWHILE, ON QUASAR'S HOMEWORLD, EARTH...
...ON THE SIDE OF THE EARTH FACING AWAY FROM THE SUN...
...QUASAR'S GIRLFRIEND KAYLA BALLANTINE PONDERS THE SAME QUESTION...
WHAT AM I GONNA DO? I CALLED IN SICK, STAYED IN BED FOR ALMOST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS... I'M GONNA GO STIR CRAZY IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING!
MAYBE I JUST IMAGINED IT--THAT I FLOATED UP TO THE CEILING IN MY SLEEP! MAYBE I'M JUST...I DON'T KNOW--COMING DOWN WITH SOMETHING.
THE FLU MAYBE.
THE IDEA THAT WENDELL CONTAMINATED ME WITH HIS QUASAR-ENERGIES IS TOO WEIRD. I MEAN--HE'D KNOW IF HE WAS LEAKING, WOULDN'T HE?
MAYBE I'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER A LONG, HOT SHOWER.
AHA! AT LAST SHE'S ◁▷▽◁!
AAAH, YESSSS... I NEEDED THIS.
WONDER IF BONNIE'S BUSY TONIGHT--
--MAYBE CLUB-HOPPING ALL NIGHT IS ALL I NEED TO FEEL LIKE MYSELF AGAIN!

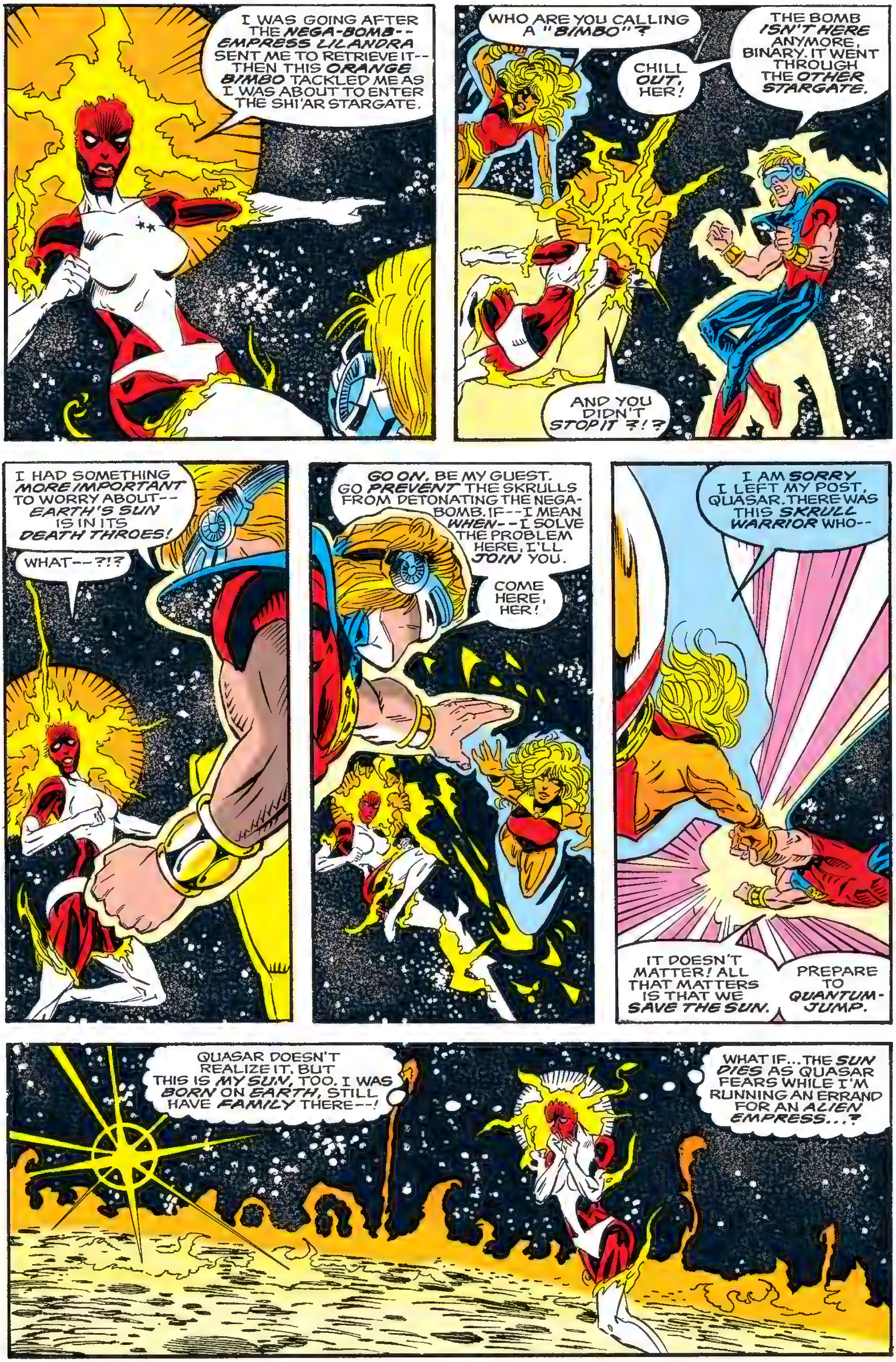

Δ!!!
AIIIEEEH!

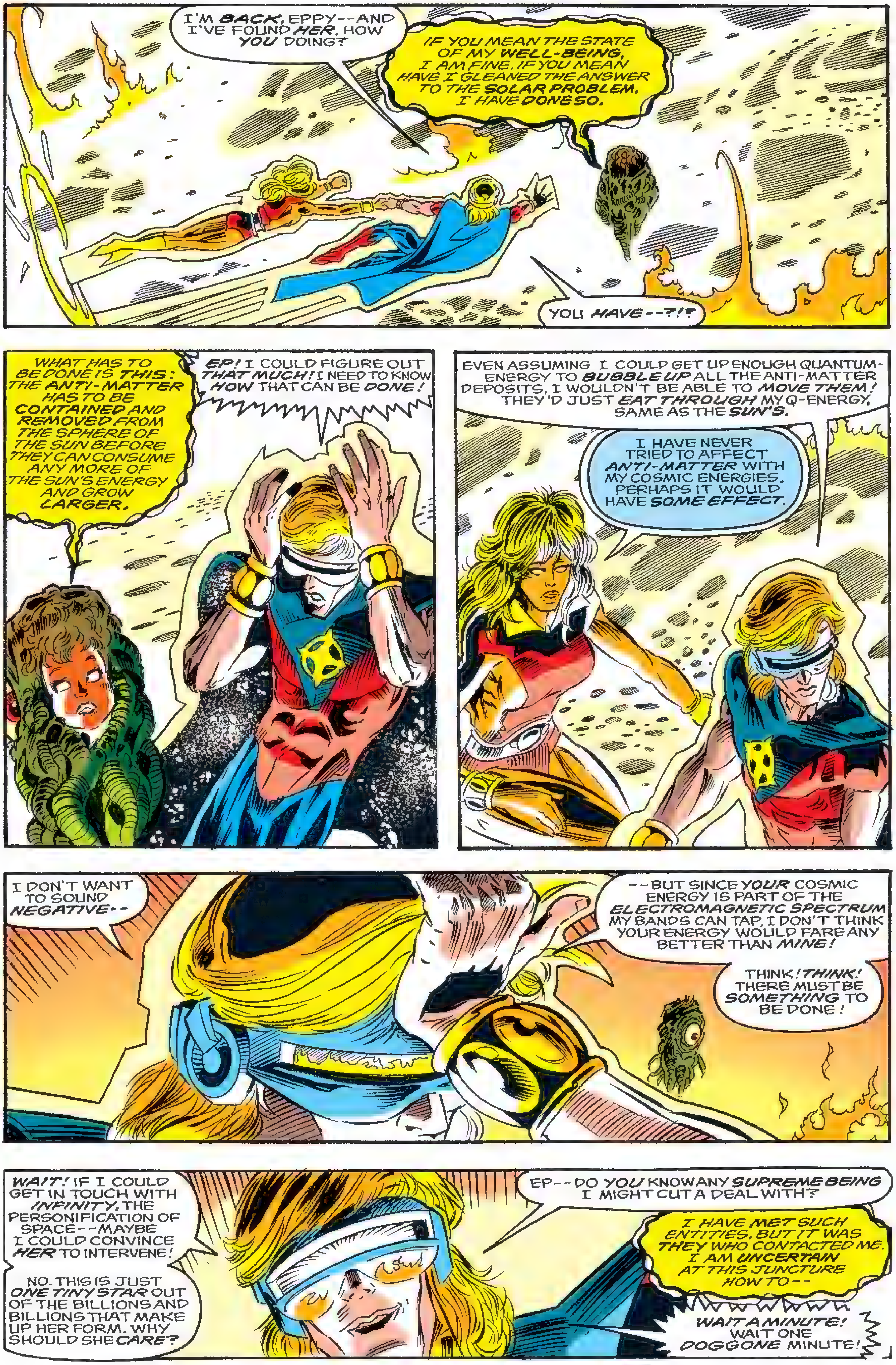

BOR
SH
M-MY G-GOD! WHAT HAPPENED--?!?

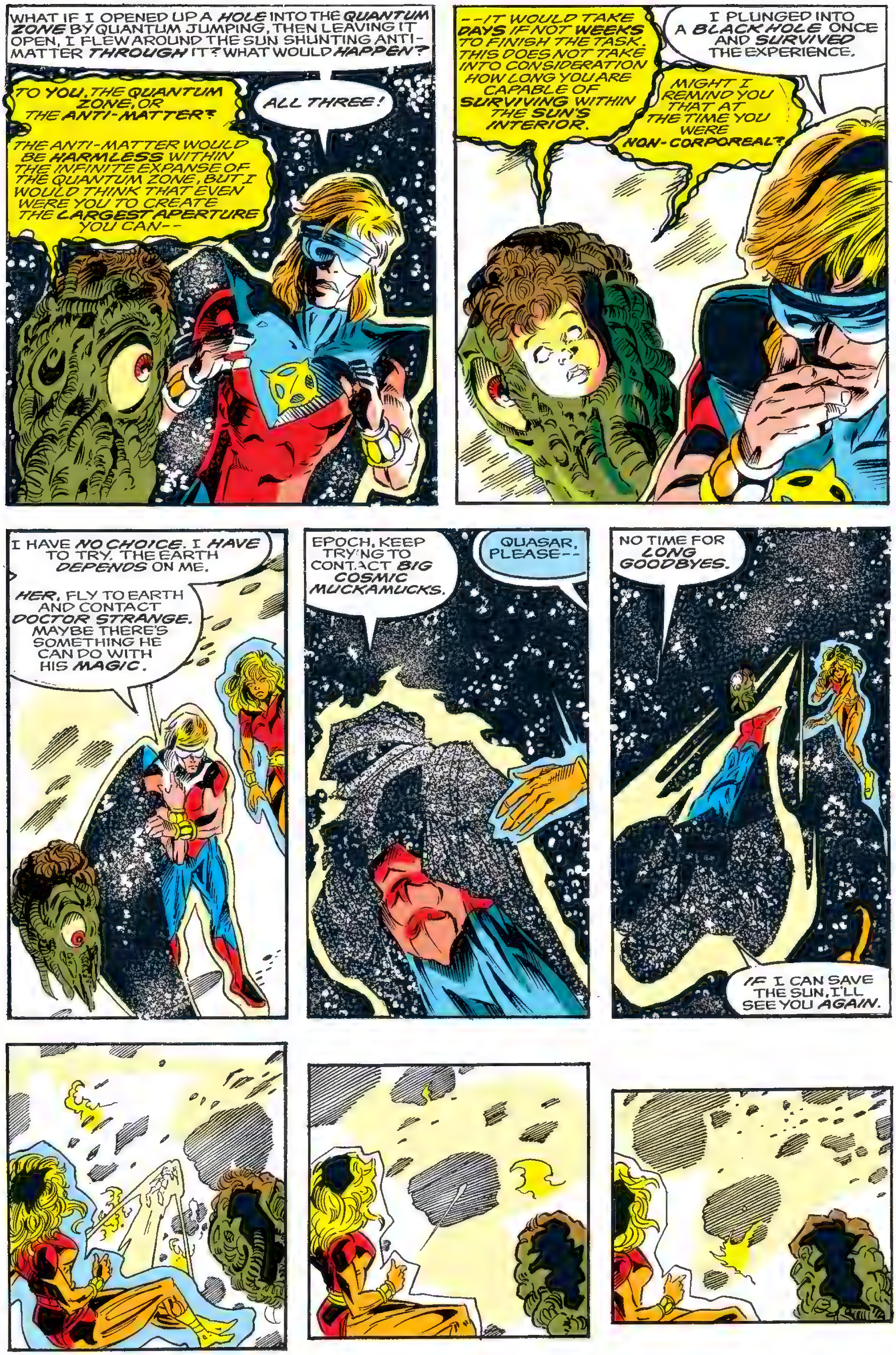

I'VE SEEN HIM BEFORE! HE JUMPED ME IN FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA ON THE DAY WENDELL OFFERED ME MY JOB!* THE ANGLER, I THINK HE WAS CALLED.
BUT WHAT'S HE WANT OF ME? AND WHAT SENT HIM FLYING WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO "NORMAN BATES" ME?
*WAY BACK IN ISSUE #3!
IS HE--STILL ALIVE?!? I CAN'T TELL! EUUWW, HIS FACE IS PARTLY... ANGULAR!
KAYLA?!?
WHAT THE %&%$ IS GOIN' ON HERE?!?
DEVON, OH, THANK GOD--YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME!
ANSWER MY QUESTIONS FIRST, SIS--WHO IS THIS CREEP? WHAT... HAPPENED TO HIM?
WHAT'S HE LOOK LIKE? HE'S A SUPER-VILLAIN! HE ATTACKED ME WHILE I WAS TAKING A SHOWER!
WITH A BOMB?!?
NO, WITH HIS FORK-HAND!
SO WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING! HE JUST--SUDDENLY WENT FLYING BACK! RIGHT THROUGH THE WALL!
HE LOOKS... DEAD, KAY. YOU'RE GONNA HAVE SOME EXPLAINING TO DO.
I KNOW! HELP ME, DEV!

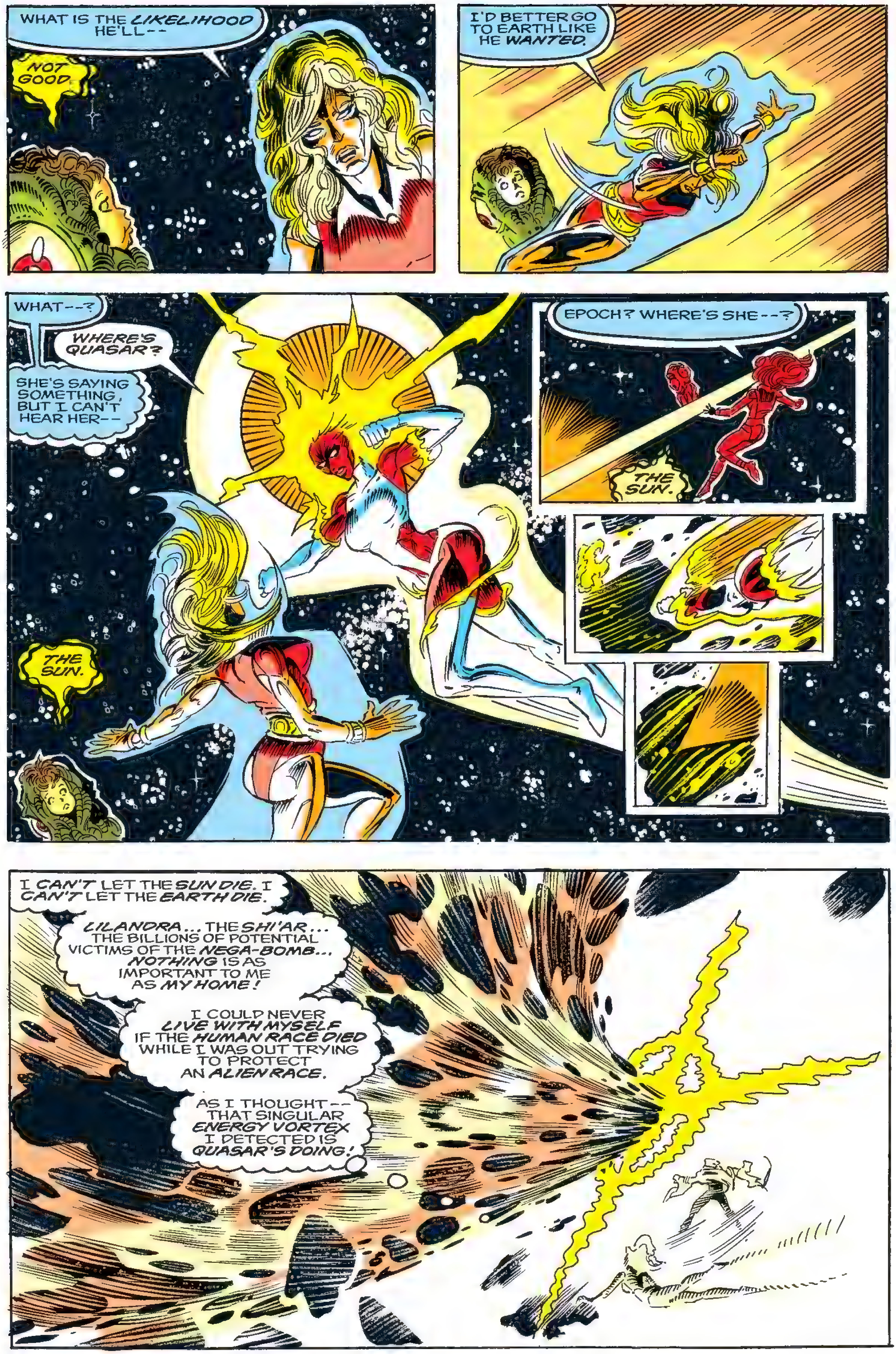

THE SUN...
HELP ME, EPOCH!
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO SAVE THE SUN!
IT'S BEING DEVOURED BY SPOTS!
AND THOSE SPOTS ARE ERUPTING!
LET ME HAVE A CLOSER LOOK, QUASAR.
WHA--?
EPOCH?!? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD DO THAT!
I'M OMNIPOTENT. I CAN DO ANYTHING ONCE I FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO IT.
WELL, LITTLE SPUDLING, I'M GOING TO NEED SOME OMNIPOTENCE HERE.
UH, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MMM. ANTI-MATTER.
I FIGURED AS MUCH. SOMETHING MY QUANTUM-BANDS HAVE NO CONTROL OVER. SO WHAT DO WE DO?
LET ME PONDER THE SITUATION.
QUASAR, THERE'S SOMEONE AT THE STARGATE.
HUH? YOU'RE RIGHT!
BUT I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW-- I'VE GOT TO--
NO, WAIT. IT MIGHT BE MORE BAD NEWS HASTENING THE SUN'S DEMISE.
BE RIGHT BACK.

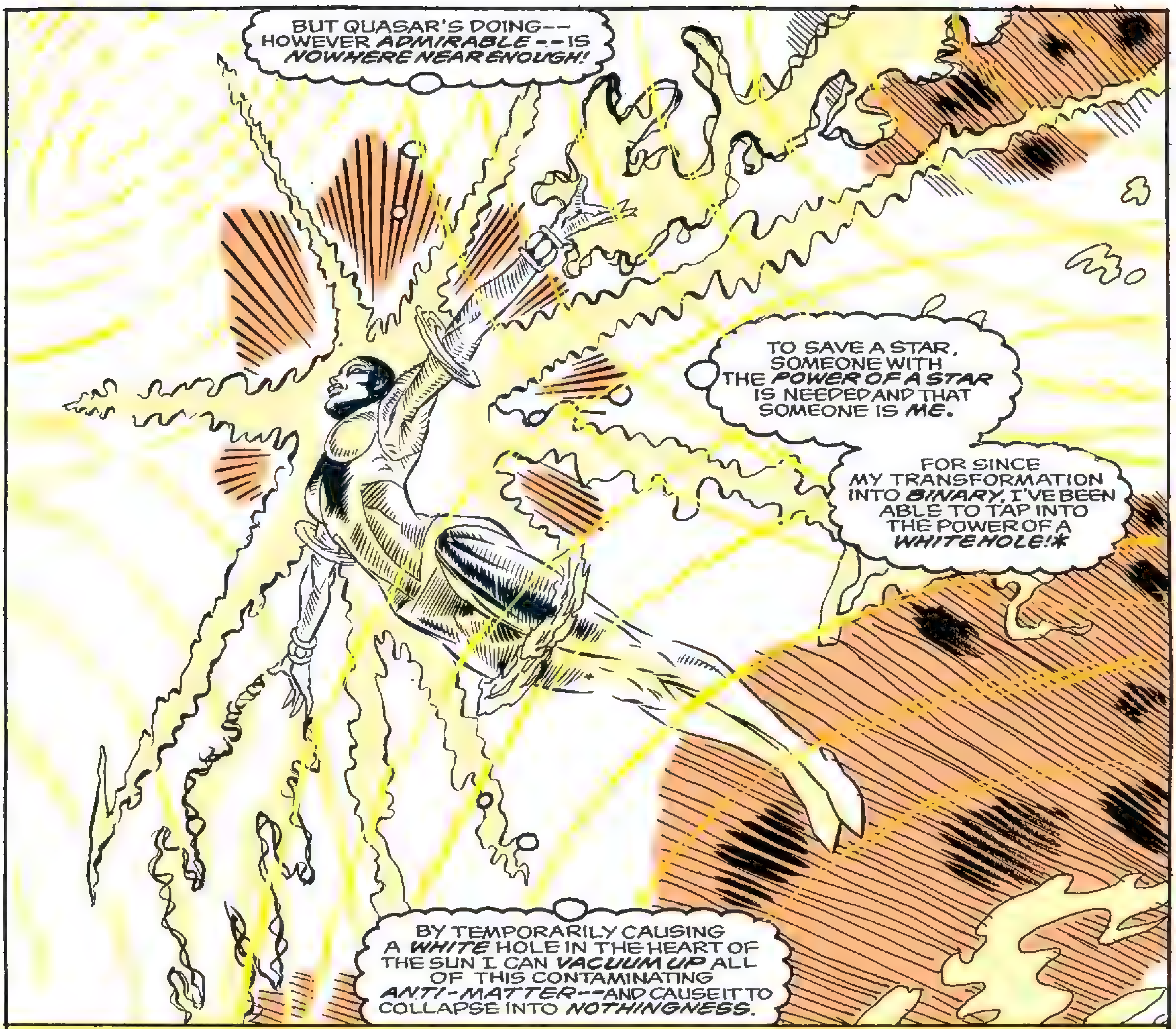

I'LL BE OKAY. I'M OMNIPOTENT.
HEY! IT'S HER! AND SHE'S WRESTLING WITH THAT LADY STARJAMMER I MET--BINARY!*
I WAS WONDERING WHERE HER WENT.
*THEY MET LAST ISSUE.
HER'S GOT A LOT OF POWER. SHE MAY BE ABLE TO HELP ME SAVE THE SUN!
OKAY, LADIES--
--BREAK IT UP!
QUASAR!
SEND A RADIO-WAVE TRANSMISSION TO THEM SO THEY CAN HEAR ME.
WHAT'S THE STORY, HERE, BINARY? TELL ME THE TRUTH OR I'LL BUBBLE YOU UP AGAIN!


I WAS GOING AFTER THE NEGA-BOMB-- EMPRESS LILANDRA SENT ME TO RETRIEVE IT-- THEN THIS ORANGE BIMBO TACKLED ME AS I WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THE SHI'AR STARGATE.
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A "BIMBO"?
CHILL OUT, HER!
THE BOMB ISN'T HERE ANYMORE, BINARY. IT WENT THROUGH THE OTHER STARGATE.
AND YOU DIDN'T STOP IT ?!?
I HAD SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT TO WORRY ABOUT-- EARTH'S SUN IS IN ITS DEATH THROES!
WHAT--?!?
GO ON. BE MY GUEST. GO PREVENT THE SKRULLS FROM DETONATING THE NEGA-BOMB. IF--I MEAN WHEN--I SOLVE THE PROBLEM HERE, I'LL JOIN YOU.
COME HERE, HER!
I AM SORRY I LEFT MY POST, QUASAR. THERE WAS THIS SKRULL WARRIOR WHO--
IT DOESN'T MATTER! ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT WE SAVE THE SUN.
PREPARE TO QUANTUM-JUMP.
QUASAR DOESN'T REALIZE IT, BUT THIS IS MY SUN, TOO. I WAS BORN ON EARTH, STILL HAVE FAMILY THERE--!
WHAT IF... THE SUN DIES AS QUASAR FEARS WHILE I'M RUNNING AN ERRAND FOR AN ALIEN EMPRESS...?

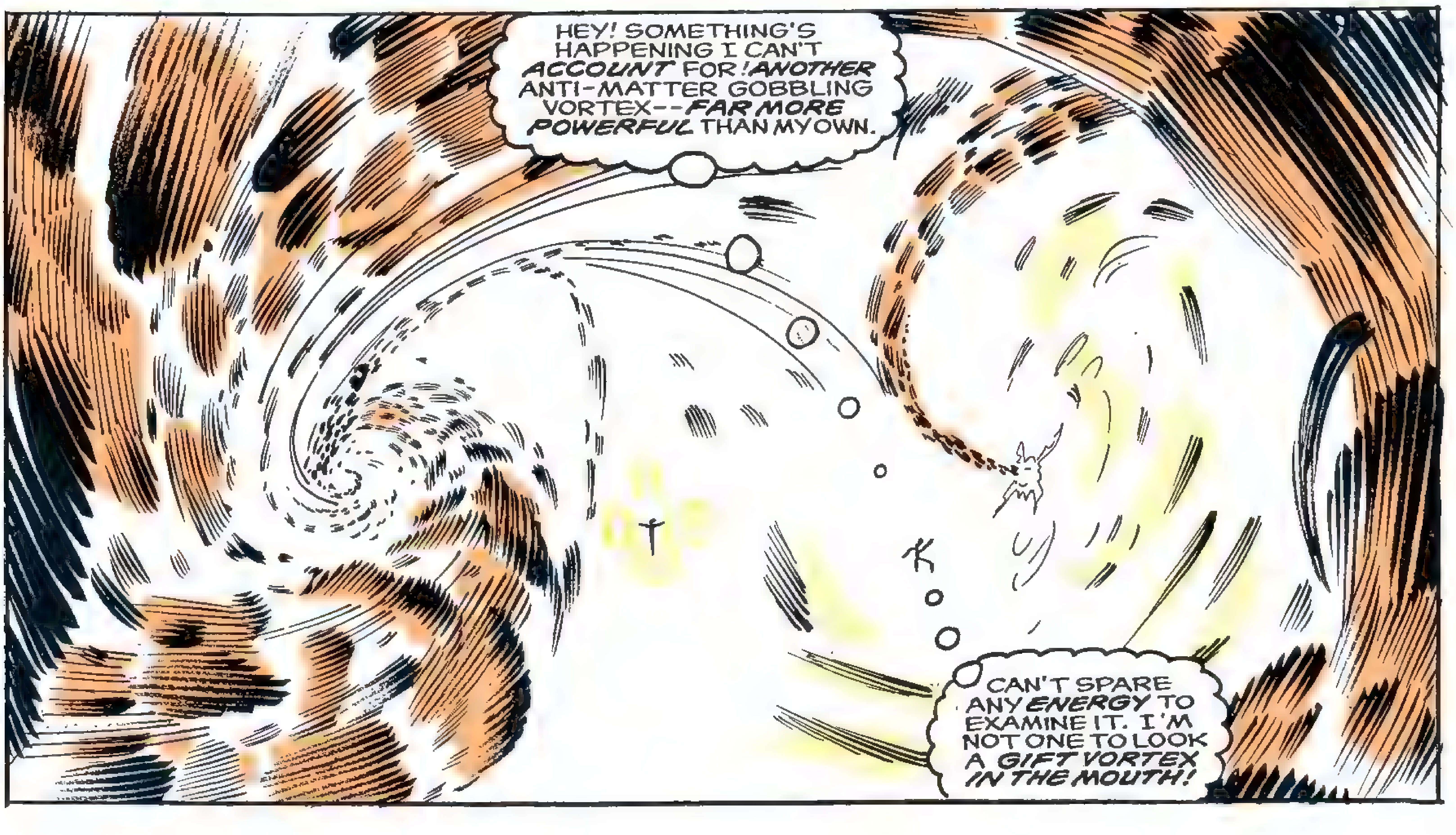

I'M BACK, EPPY--AND I'VE FOUND HER. HOW YOU DOING?
IF YOU MEAN THE STATE OF MY WELL-BEING, I AM FINE. IF YOU MEAN HAVE I GLEANED THE ANSWER TO THE SOLAR PROBLEM, I HAVE DONE SO.
YOU HAVE--?!?
WHAT HAS TO BE DONE IS THIS: THE ANTI-MATTER HAS TO BE CONTAINED AND REMOVED FROM THE SPHERE OF THE SUN BEFORE THEY CAN CONSUME ANY MORE OF THE SUN'S ENERGY AND GROW LARGER.
EP! I COULD FIGURE OUT THAT MUCH! I NEED TO KNOW HOW THAT CAN BE DONE!
EVEN ASSUMING I COULD GET UP ENOUGH QUANTUM-ENERGY TO BUBBLE UP ALL THE ANTI-MATTER DEPOSITS, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO MOVE THEM! THEY'D JUST EAT THROUGH MY Q-ENERGY, SAME AS THE SUN'S.
I HAVE NEVER TRIED TO AFFECT ANTI-MATTER WITH MY COSMIC ENERGIES. PERHAPS IT WOULD HAVE SOME EFFECT.
I DON'T WANT TO SOUND NEGATIVE--
--BUT SINCE YOUR COSMIC ENERGY IS PART OF THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM MY BANDS CAN TAP, I DON'T THINK YOUR ENERGY WOULD FARE ANY BETTER THAN MINE!
THINK! THINK! THERE MUST BE SOMETHING TO BE DONE!
WAIT! IF I COULD GET IN TOUCH WITH INFINITY, THE PERSONIFICATION OF SPACE--MAYBE I COULD CONVINCE HER TO INTERVENE!
NO. THIS IS JUST ONE TINY STAR OUT OF THE BILLIONS AND BILLIONS THAT MAKE UP HER FORM. WHY SHOULD SHE CARE?
EP--DO YOU KNOW ANY SUPREME BEING I MIGHT CUT A DEAL WITH?
I HAVE MET SUCH ENTITIES, BUT IT WAS THEY WHO CONTACTED ME. I AM UNCERTAIN AT THIS JUNCTURE HOW TO--
WAIT A MINUTE! WAIT ONE DOGGONE MINUTE!

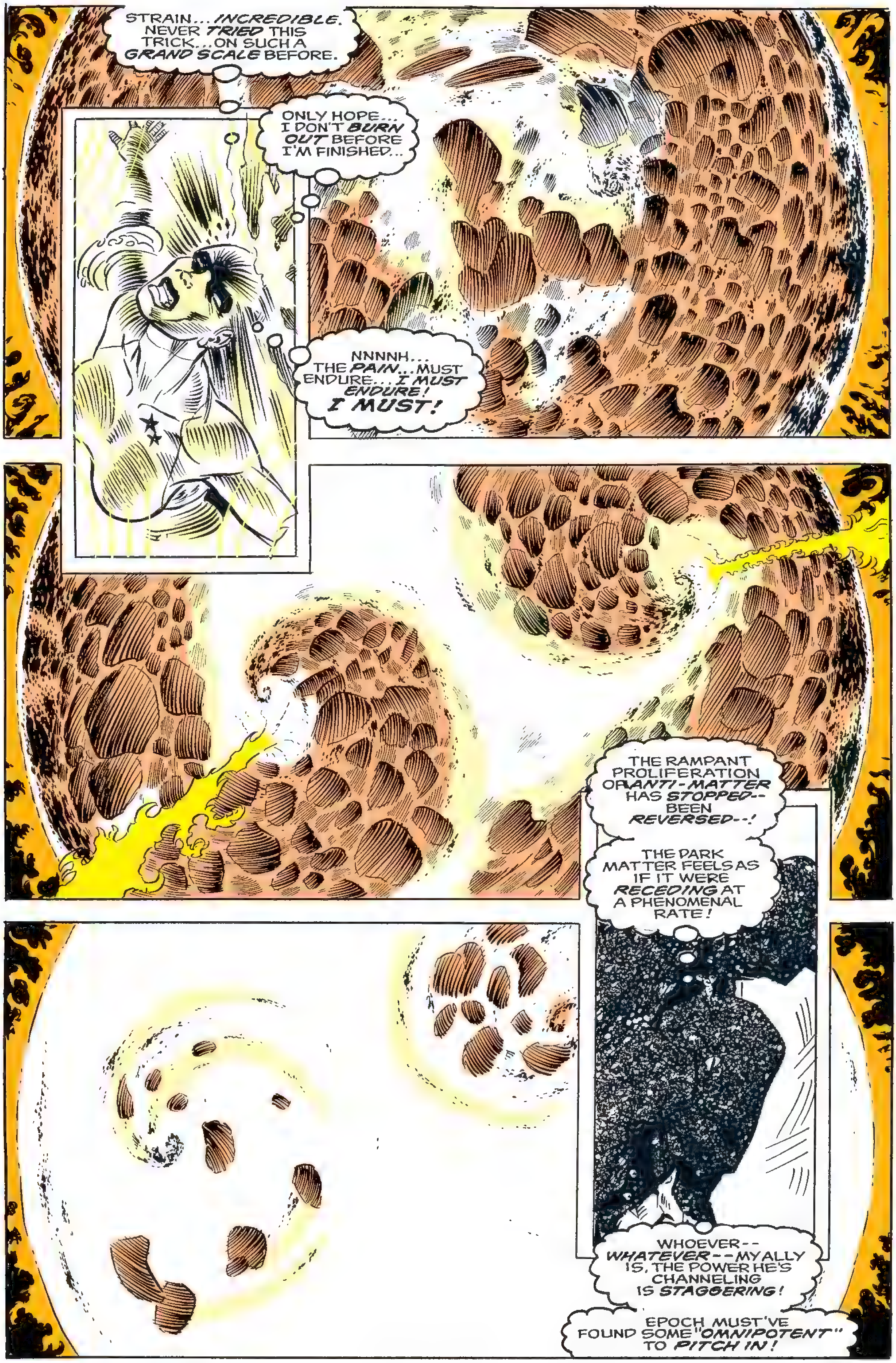

WHAT IF I OPENED UP A HOLE INTO THE QUANTUM ZONE BY QUANTUM JUMPING, THEN LEAVING IT OPEN, I FLEW AROUND THE SUN SHUNTING ANTI-MATTER THROUGH IT? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?
TO YOU, THE QUANTUM ZONE, OR THE ANTI-MATTER?
ALL THREE!
THE ANTI-MATTER WOULD BE HARMLESS WITHIN THE INFINITE EXPANSE OF THE QUANTUM ZONE, BUT I WOULD THINK THAT EVEN WERE YOU TO CREATE THE LARGEST APERTURE YOU CAN--
--IT WOULD TAKE DAYS IF NOT WEEKS TO FINISH THE TASK. THIS DOES NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION HOW LONG YOU ARE CAPABLE OF SURVIVING WITHIN THE SUN'S INTERIOR.
I PLUNGED INTO A BLACK HOLE ONCE AND SURVIVED THE EXPERIENCE.
MIGHT I REMIND YOU THAT AT THE TIME YOU WERE NON-CORPOREAL?
I HAVE NO CHOICE. I HAVE TO TRY. THE EARTH DEPENDS ON ME.
HER, FLY TO EARTH AND CONTACT DOCTOR STRANGE. MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING HE CAN DO WITH HIS MAGIC.
EPOCH, KEEP TRYING TO CONTACT BIG COSMIC MUCKAMUCKS.
QUASAR, PLEASE--
NO TIME FOR LONG GOODBYES.
IF I CAN SAVE THE SUN, I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN.

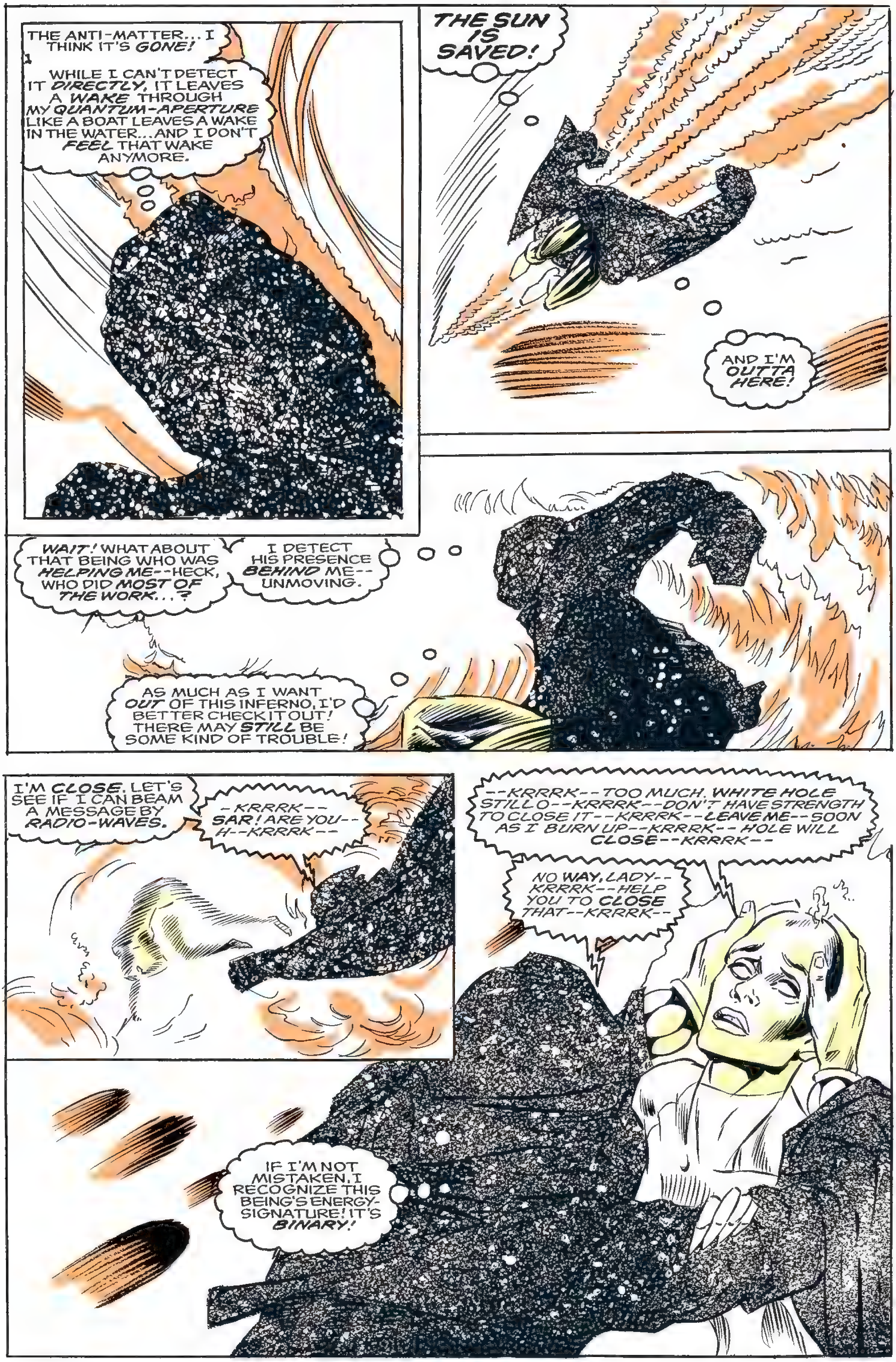

WHAT IS THE *LIKELIHOOD* HE'LL--
NOT GOOD.
I'D BETTER GO TO EARTH LIKE HE *WANTED.*
WHAT--?
WHERE'S QUASAR?
SHE'S SAYING SOMETHING, BUT I CAN'T HEAR HER--
THE SUN.
EPOCH? WHERE'S SHE--?
THE SUN.
I *CAN'T* LET THE *SUN DIE.* I *CAN'T* LET THE *EARTH DIE.*
LILANDRA... THE SHI'AR... THE BILLIONS OF POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF THE *NEGA-BOMB... NOTHING* IS AS IMPORTANT TO ME AS *MY HOME!*
I COULD NEVER *LIVE WITH MYSELF* IF THE *HUMAN RACE DIED* WHILE I WAS OUT TRYING TO PROTECT AN *ALIEN RACE.*
AS I THOUGHT-- THAT SINGULAR *ENERGY VORTEX* I DETECTED IS *QUASAR'S DOING!*

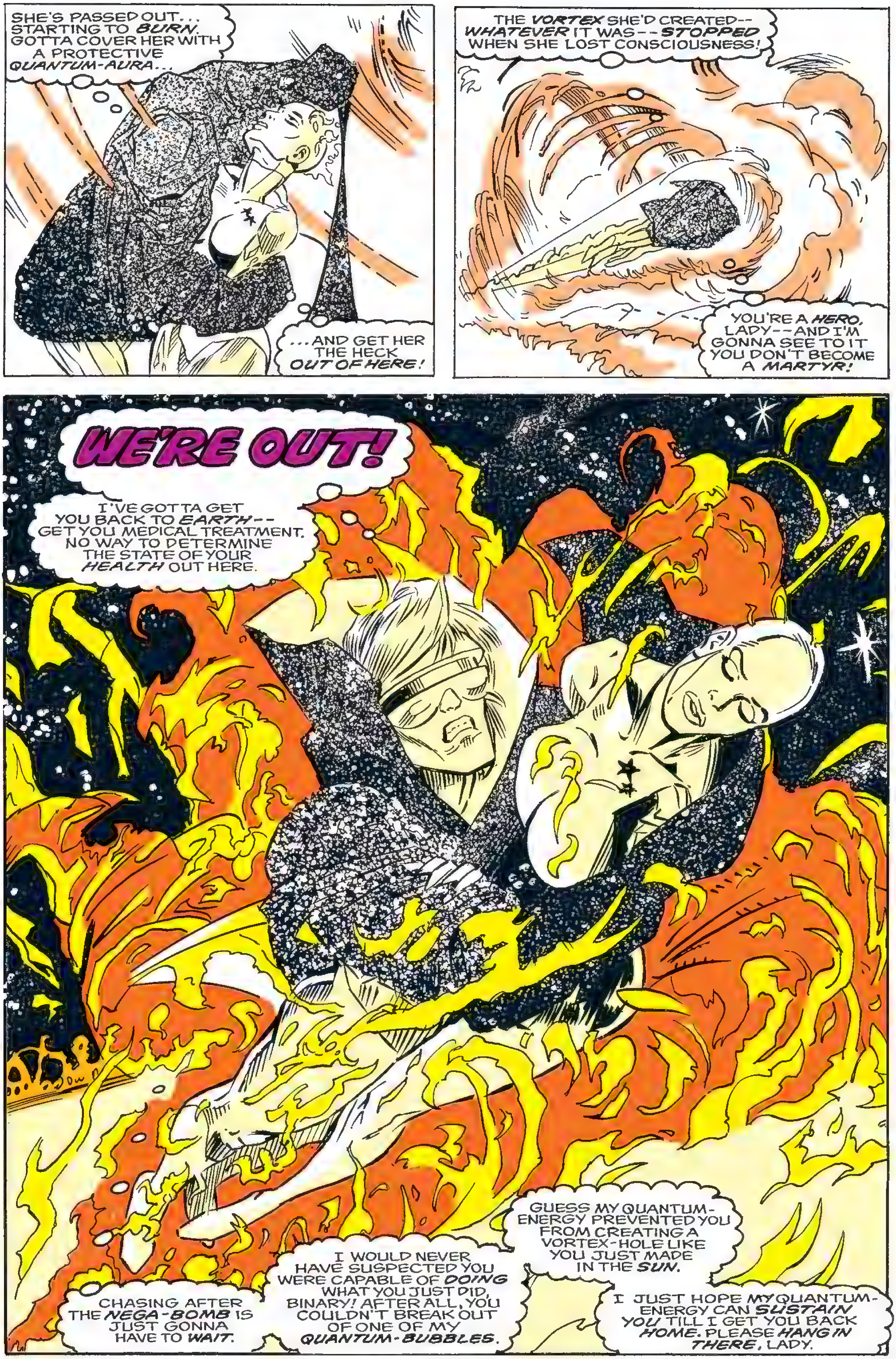

BUT QUASAR'S DOING--HOWEVER *ADMIRABLE*--IS *NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH!*
TO SAVE A STAR, SOMEONE WITH THE *POWER OF A STAR* IS NEEDED AND THAT SOMEONE IS *ME.*
FOR SINCE MY TRANSFORMATION INTO *BINARY,* I'VE BEEN ABLE TO TAP INTO THE POWER OF A *WHITE HOLE!**
BY TEMPORARILY CAUSING A *WHITE* HOLE IN THE HEART OF THE SUN I CAN *VACUUM UP* ALL OF THIS CONTAMINATING *ANTI-MATTER*--AND CAUSE IT TO COLLAPSE INTO *NOTHINGNESS.*

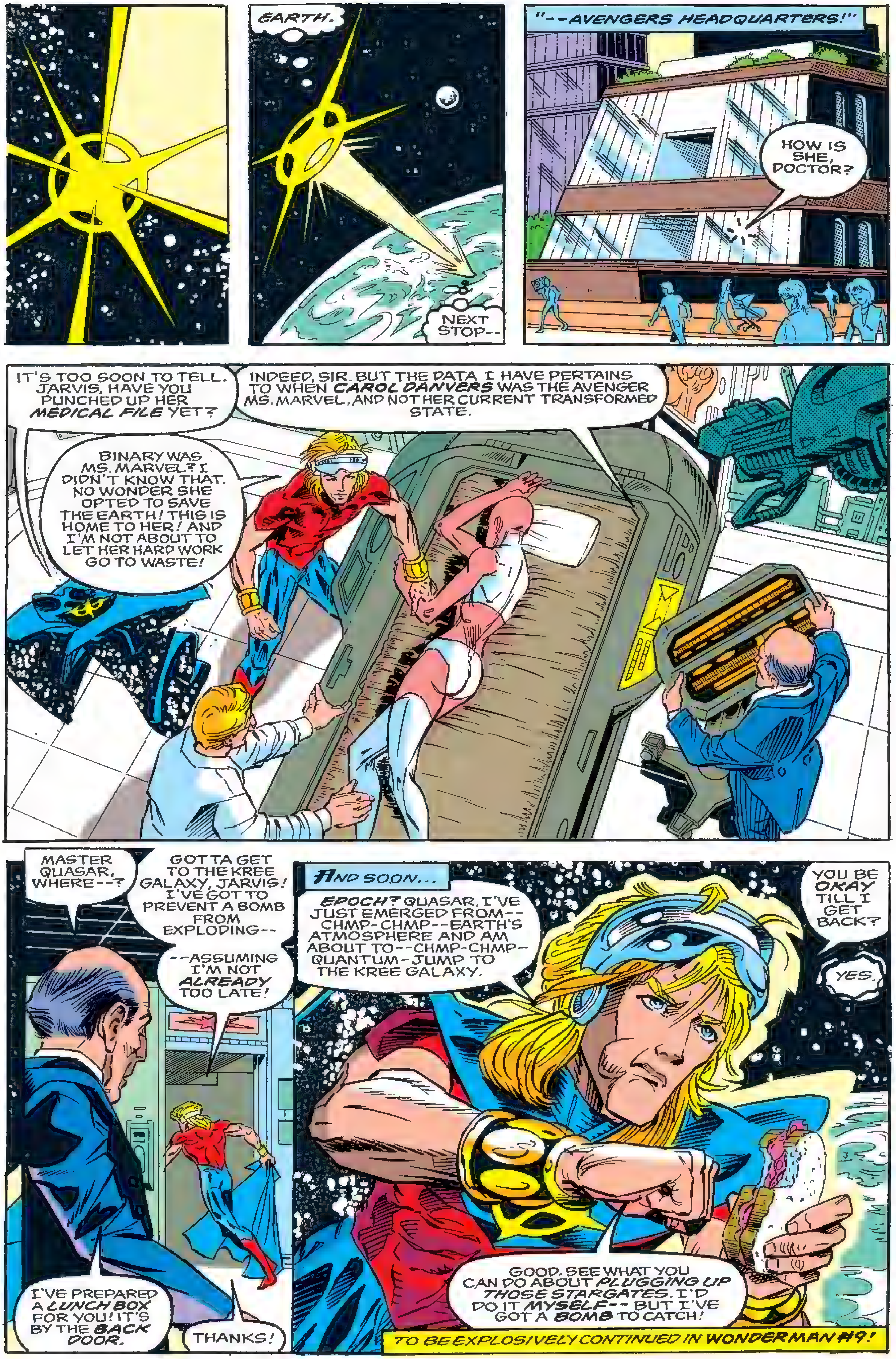
A *BLACK HOLE* IS A STAR OF SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER MASS THAN OUR SUN WHICH HAS REACHED THE END OF ITS STELLAR EVOLUTION AND HAS COLLAPSED INTO AN OBJECT SO DENSE THAT LIGHT CANNOT PENETRATE ITS GRAVITY FIELD. A *WHITE HOLE,* ON THE OTHER HAND, IS... UM, SOMETHING FEW EARTH ASTROPHYSICISTS HAVE SPECULATED ABOUT AS YET. WE'D ASK BINARY WHAT **SHE THINKS IT IS, BUT SHE'S RATHER BUSY RIGHT NOW. -- KELLY


HEY! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING I CAN'T *ACCOUNT* FOR! *ANOTHER* ANTI-MATTER GOBBLING VORTEX--*FAR MORE POWERFUL* THAN MY OWN.
CAN'T SPARE ANY *ENERGY* TO EXAMINE IT. I'M NOT ONE TO LOOK A *GIFT VORTEX IN THE MOUTH!*


STRAIN... INCREDIBLE. NEVER TRIED THIS TRICK... ON SUCH A GRAND SCALE BEFORE.
ONLY HOPE... I DON'T BURN OUT BEFORE I'M FINISHED...
NNNNH... THE PAIN... MUST ENDURE... I MUST ENDURE! I MUST!
THE RAMPANT PROLIFERATION OF ANTI-MATTER HAS STOPPED-- BEEN REVERSED--!
THE DARK MATTER FEELS AS IF IT WERE RECEDING AT A PHENOMENAL RATE!
WHOEVER-- WHATEVER-- MY ALLY IS, THE POWER HE'S CHANNELING IS STAGGERING!
EPOCH MUST'VE FOUND SOME "OMNIPOTENT" TO PITCH IN!


THE ANTI-MATTER... I THINK IT'S *GONE!*
WHILE I CAN'T DETECT IT *DIRECTLY,* IT LEAVES A *WAKE* THROUGH MY *QUANTUM-APERTURE* LIKE A BOAT LEAVES A WAKE IN THE WATER...AND I DON'T *FEEL* THAT WAKE ANYMORE.
THE SUN IS SAVED!
AND I'M *OUTTA HERE!*
WAIT! WHAT ABOUT THAT BEING WHO WAS *HELPING ME*--HECK, WHO DID *MOST OF THE WORK...?*
I DETECT HIS PRESENCE *BEHIND* ME--UNMOVING.
AS MUCH AS I WANT *OUT* OF THIS INFERNO, I'D BETTER CHECK IT OUT! THERE MAY *STILL* BE SOME KIND OF TROUBLE!
I'M *CLOSE.* LET'S SEE IF I CAN BEAM A MESSAGE BY *RADIO-WAVES.*
--KRRRK-- SAR! ARE YOU-- H--KRRRK--
--KRRRK--TOO MUCH. WHITE HOLE STILL O--KRRRK--DON'T HAVE STRENGTH TO CLOSE IT--KRRRK--LEAVE ME--SOON AS I BURN UP--KRRRK-- HOLE WILL CLOSE--KRRRK--
NO WAY, LADY--KRRRK--HELP YOU TO CLOSE THAT--KRRRK--
IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, I RECOGNIZE THIS BEING'S ENERGY-SIGNATURE! IT'S *BINARY!*


SHE'S PASSED OUT... STARTING TO *BURN*. GOTTA COVER HER WITH A PROTECTIVE *QUANTUM-AURA*...
...AND GET HER THE HECK *OUT OF HERE!*
THE *VORTEX* SHE'D CREATED-- *WHATEVER* IT WAS-- *STOPPED* WHEN SHE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS!
YOU'RE A *HERO*, LADY-- AND I'M GONNA SEE TO IT YOU DON'T BECOME A *MARTYR!*
WE'RE OUT!
I'VE GOTTA GET YOU BACK TO *EARTH*-- GET YOU MEDICAL TREATMENT. NO WAY TO DETERMINE THE STATE OF YOUR *HEALTH* OUT HERE.
GUESS MY QUANTUM-ENERGY PREVENTED YOU FROM CREATING A VORTEX-HOLE LIKE YOU JUST MADE IN THE *SUN*.
I WOULD NEVER HAVE SUSPECTED YOU WERE CAPABLE OF *DOING* WHAT YOU JUST DID, BINARY! AFTER ALL, YOU COULDN'T BREAK OUT OF ONE OF MY *QUANTUM-BUBBLES*.
CHASING AFTER THE *NEGA-BOMB* IS JUST GONNA HAVE TO *WAIT*.
I JUST HOPE *MY* QUANTUM-ENERGY CAN *SUSTAIN YOU* TILL I GET YOU BACK *HOME*. PLEASE *HANG IN THERE*, LADY.


EARTH.
NEXT STOP--
"--AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS!"
HOW IS SHE, DOCTOR?
IT'S TOO SOON TO TELL. JARVIS, HAVE YOU PUNCHED UP HER *MEDICAL FILE* YET?
INDEED, SIR. BUT THE DATA I HAVE PERTAINS TO WHEN *CAROL DANVERS* WAS THE AVENGER MS. MARVEL, AND NOT HER CURRENT TRANSFORMED STATE.
BINARY WAS MS. MARVEL? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT. NO WONDER SHE OPTED TO SAVE THE EARTH! THIS IS HOME TO HER! AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET HER HARD WORK GO TO WASTE!
MASTER QUASAR, WHERE--?
GOTTA GET TO THE KREE GALAXY, JARVIS! I'VE GOT TO PREVENT A BOMB FROM EXPLODING--
--ASSUMING I'M NOT *ALREADY* TOO LATE!
I'VE PREPARED A *LUNCH BOX* FOR YOU! IT'S BY THE *BACK DOOR.*
THANKS!
AND SOON...
EPOCH? QUASAR. I'VE JUST EMERGED FROM-- CHMP-CHMP--EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE AND AM ABOUT TO--CHMP-CHMP-QUANTUM-JUMP TO THE KREE GALAXY.
YOU BE *OKAY* TILL I GET BACK?
YES.
GOOD. SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT *PLUGGING UP THOSE STARGATES.* I'D DO IT *MYSELF*-- BUT I'VE GOT A *BOMB* TO CATCH!
TO BE EXPLOSIVELY CONTINUED IN WONDER MAN #9!

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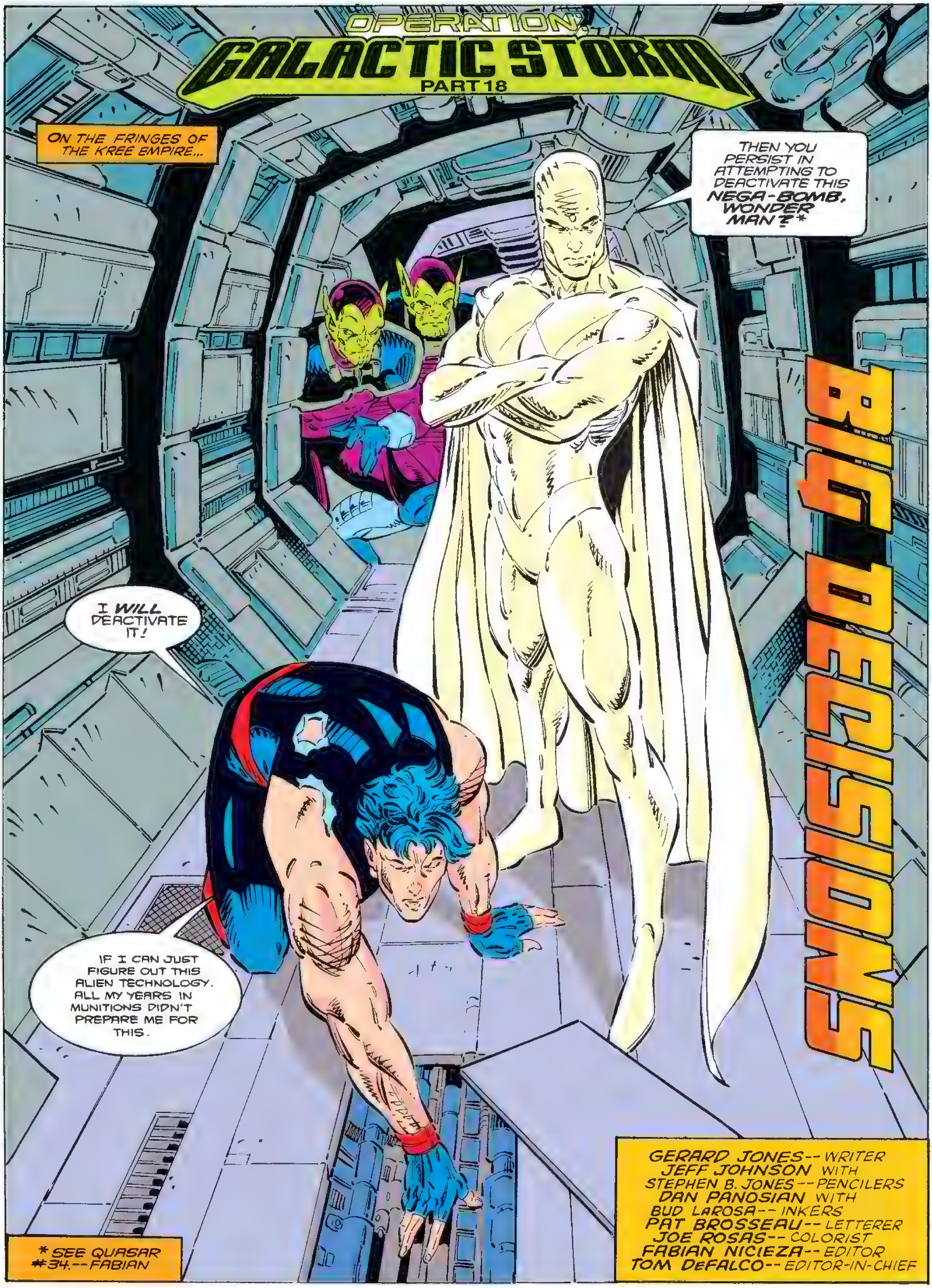
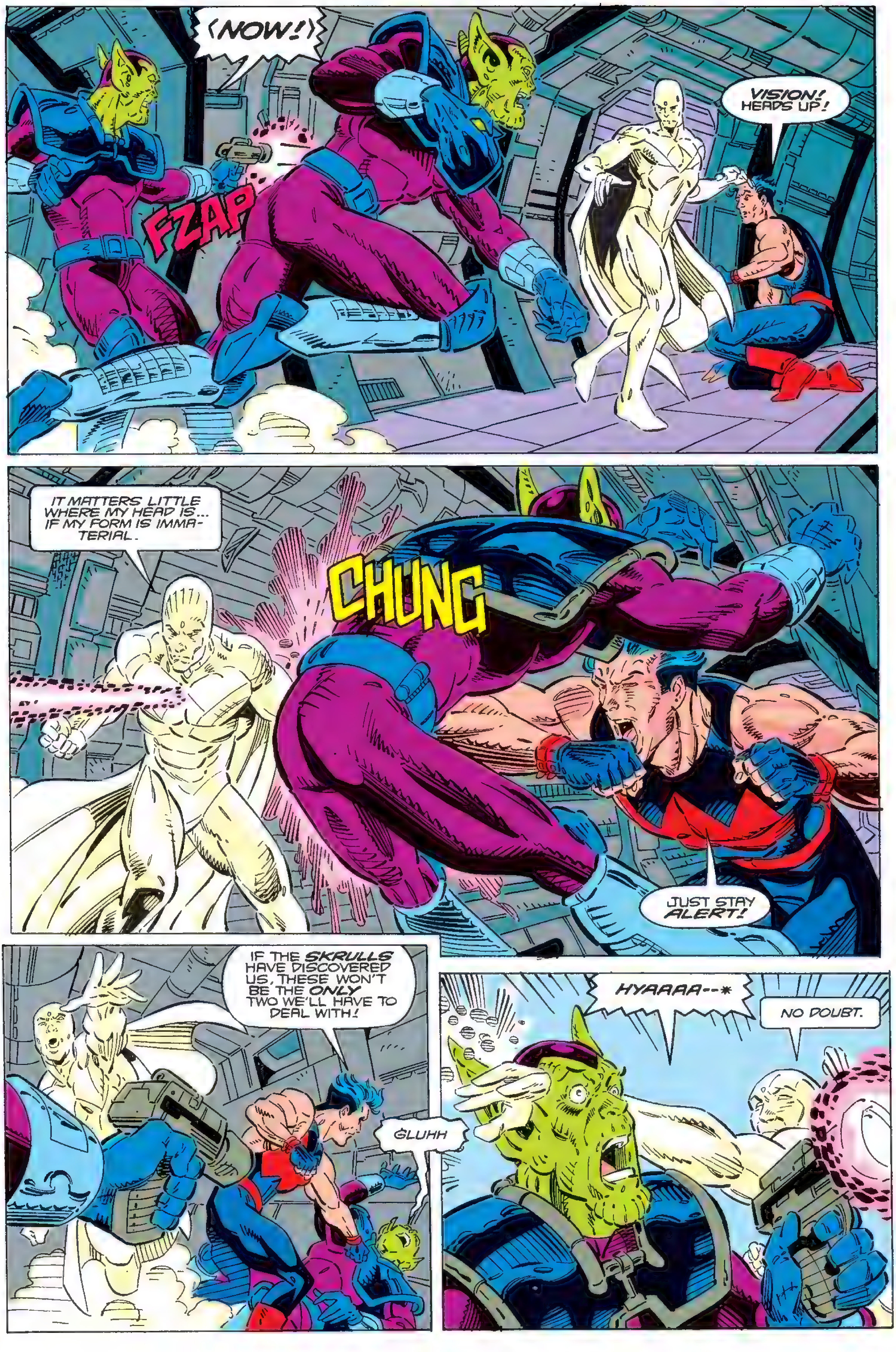
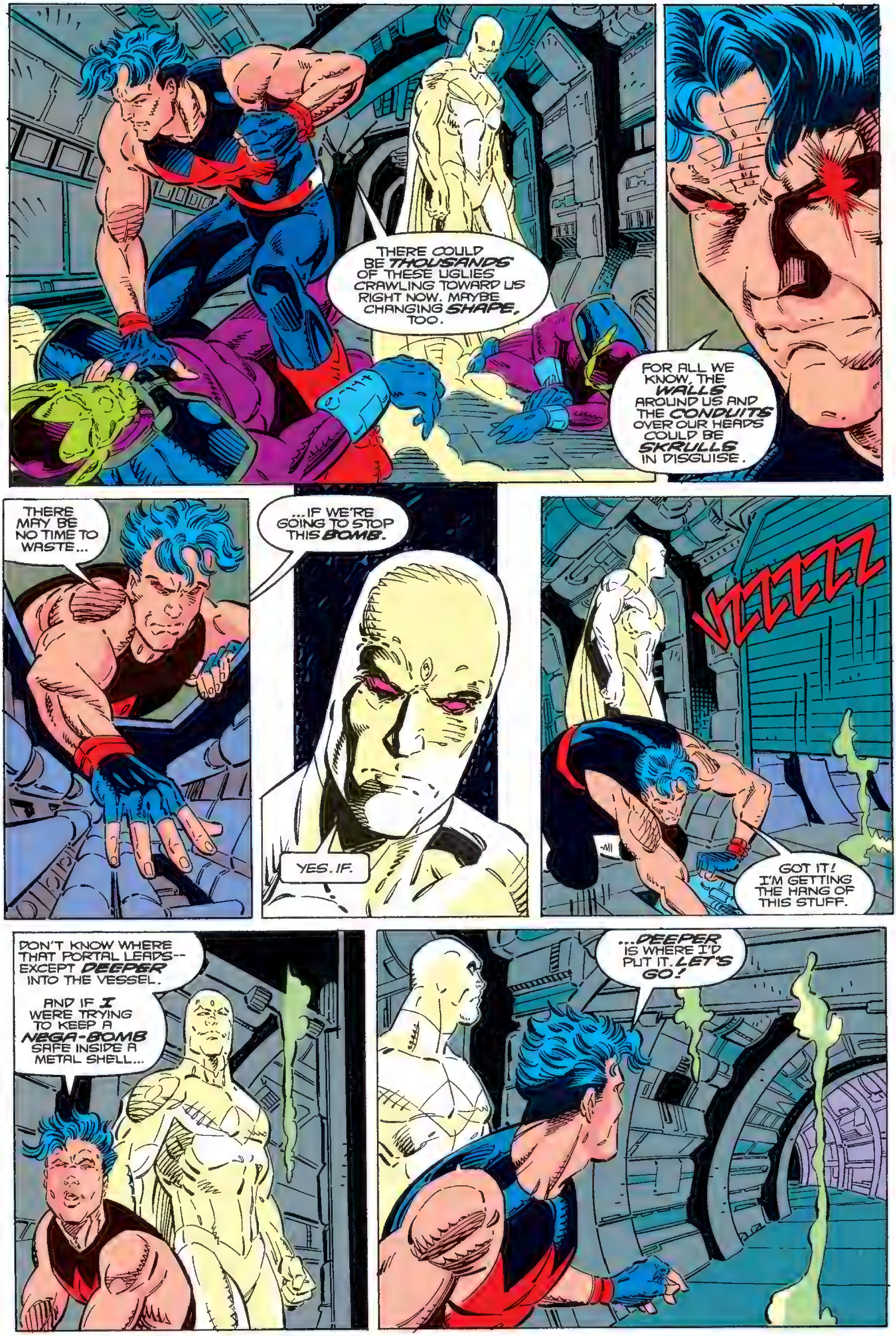
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 18
WONDER MAN™
NEGA BOMB
W

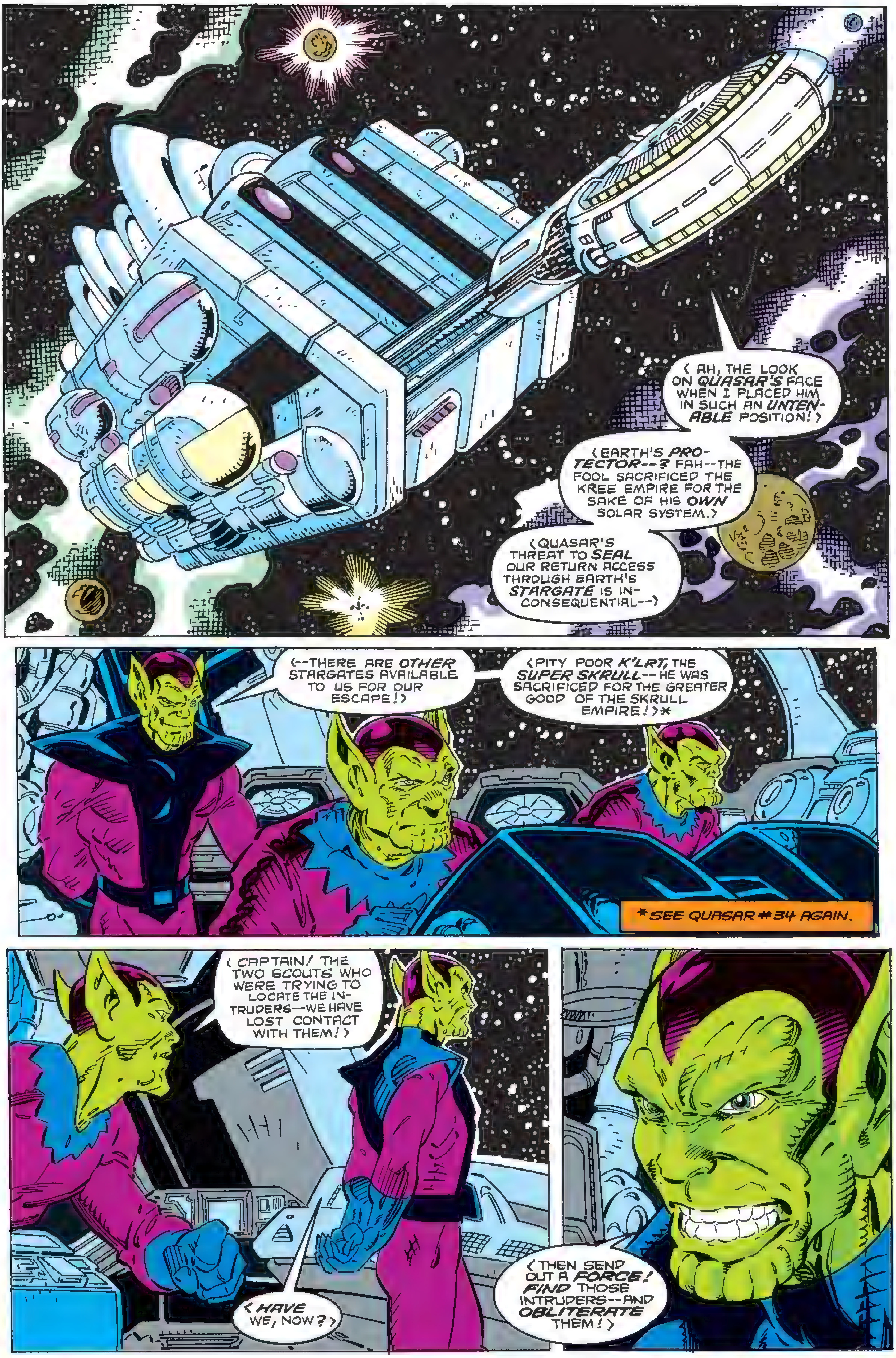
THE NEGA-BOMB — A DEVICE OF VAST DESTRUCTIVE POTENTIAL, BUILT BY THE ALIEN SHI'AR TO DESTROY THEIR ENEMIES, THE KREE, HAS BEEN INTERCEPTED BY THE KREE'S ANCESTRAL FOES, THE SKRULLS, WHO INTEND TO DELIVER THE PAYLOAD! ABOARD THE BOMB ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN STOP IT — THE VISION AND WONDER MAN!

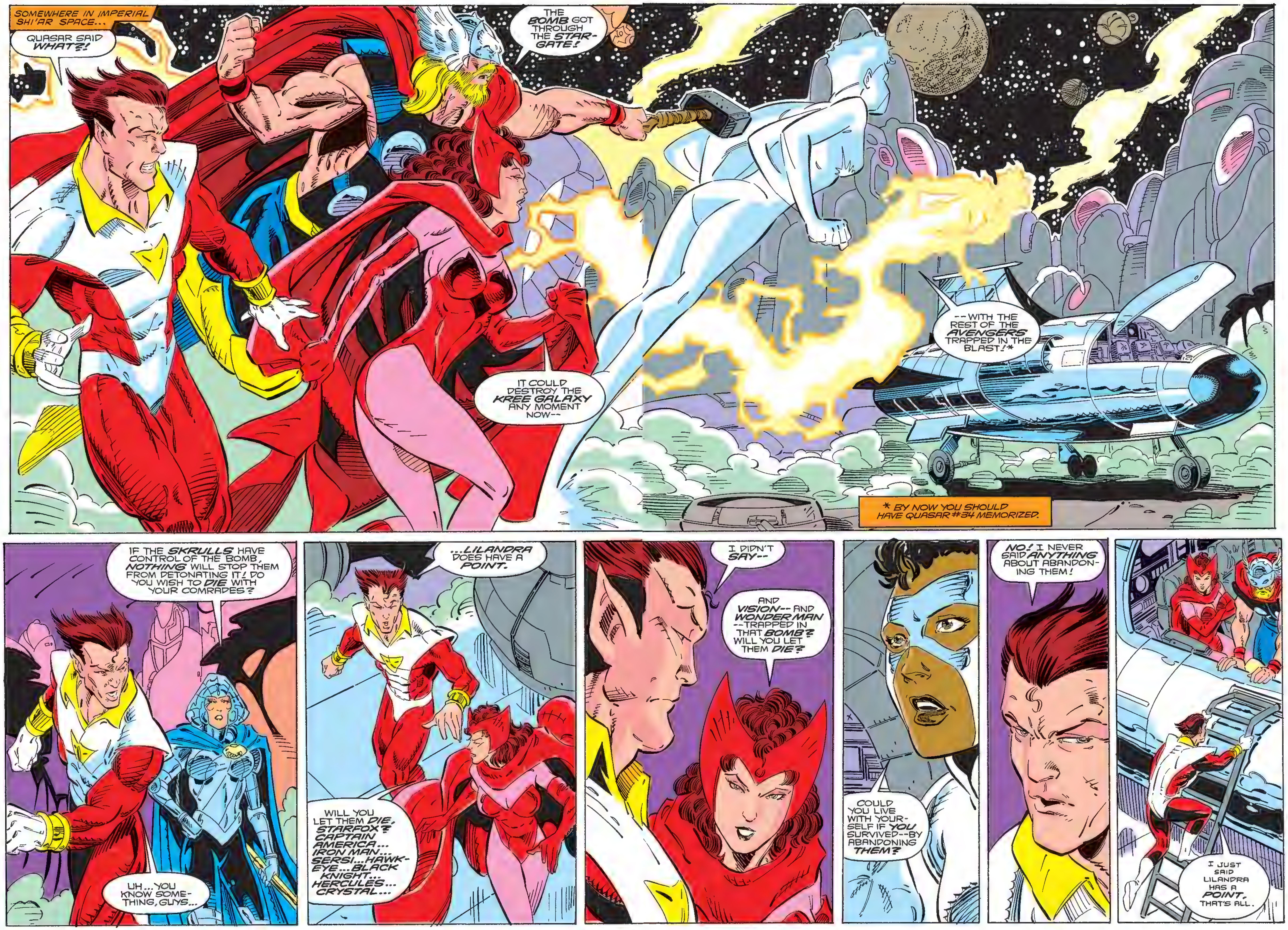

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 18
ON THE FRINGES OF THE KREE EMPIRE...
THEN YOU PERSIST IN ATTEMPTING TO DEACTIVATE THIS NEGA-BOMB, WONDER MAN?*
BIG DECISIONS
I WILL DEACTIVATE IT!
IF I CAN JUST FIGURE OUT THIS ALIEN TECHNOLOGY. ALL MY YEARS IN MUNITIONS DIDN'T PREPARE ME FOR THIS.
* SEE QUASAR #34.--FABIAN
GERARD JONES-- WRITER
JEFF JOHNSON WITH
STEPHEN B. JONES-- PENCILERS
DAN PANOSIAN WITH
BUD LaROSA-- INKERS
PAT BROSSEAU-- LETTERER
JOE ROSAS-- COLORIST
FABIAN NICIEZA-- EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO-- EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

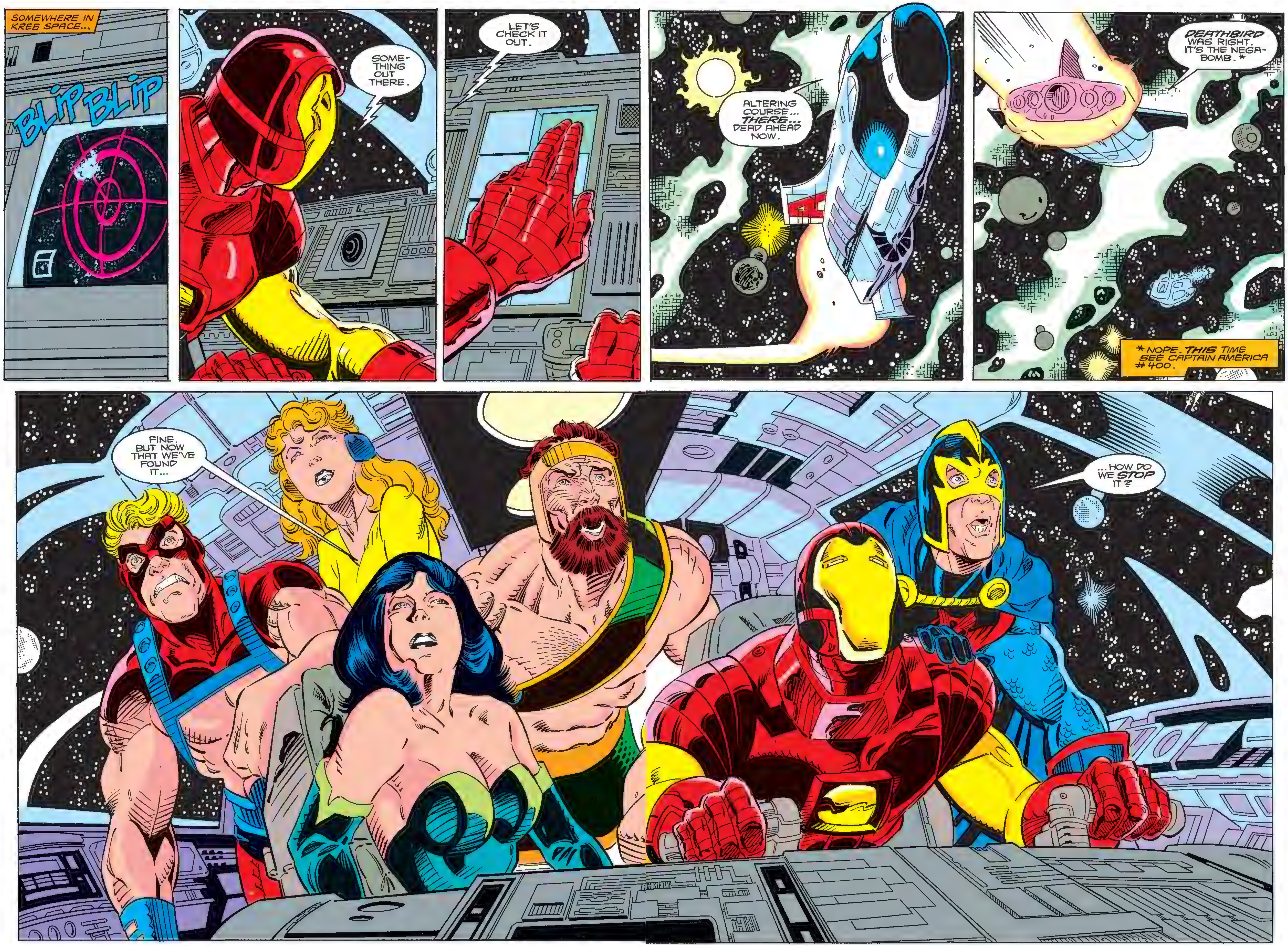

⟨NOW!⟩
FZAP
VISION! HEADS UP!
IT MATTERS LITTLE WHERE MY HEAD IS... IF MY FORM IS IMMATERIAL.
CHUNG
JUST STAY *ALERT!*
IF THE *SKRULLS* HAVE DISCOVERED US, THESE WON'T BE THE *ONLY* TWO WE'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH!
GLUHH
HYAAAA--*
NO DOUBT.

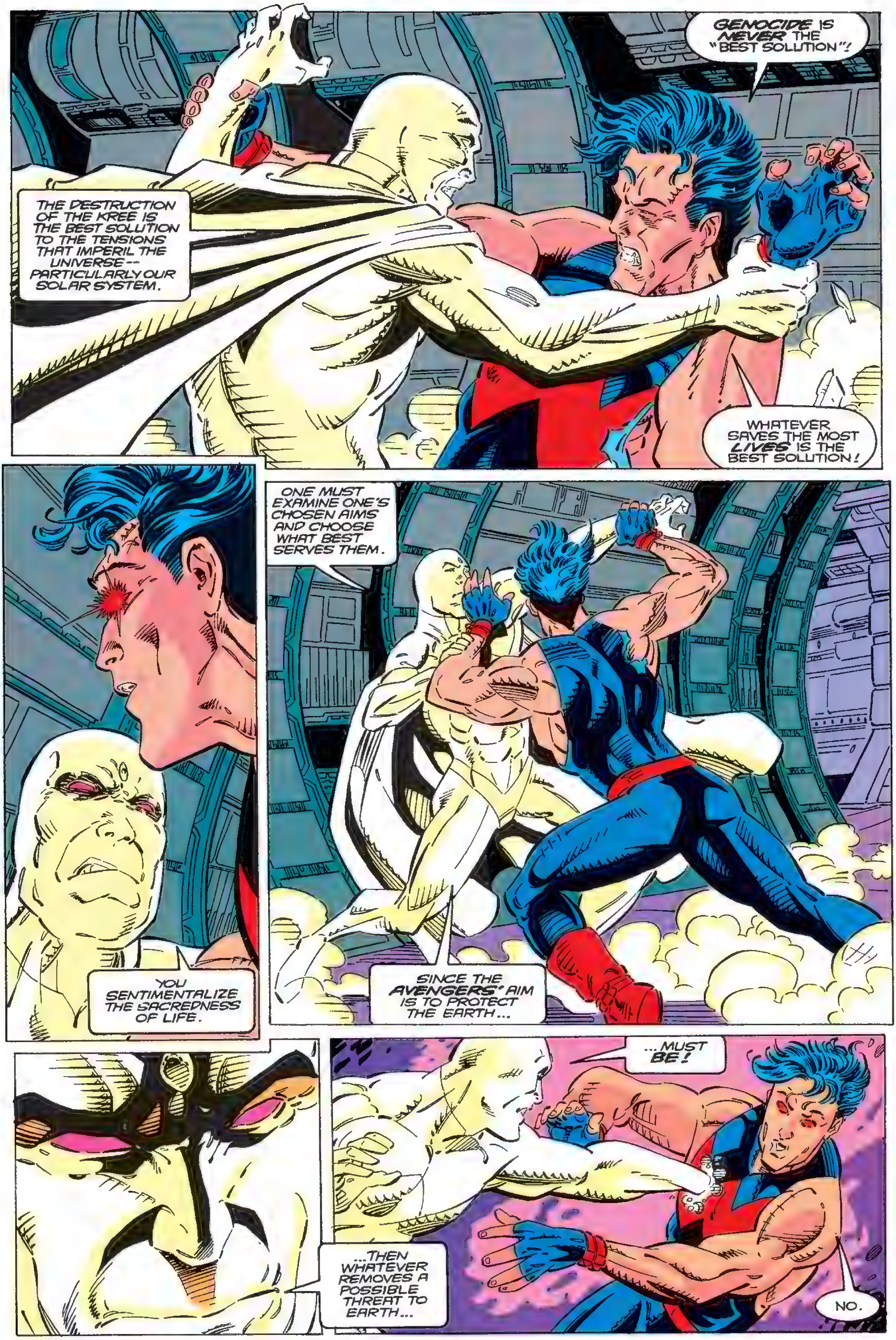

THERE COULD BE *THOUSANDS* OF THESE UGLIES CRAWLING TOWARD US RIGHT NOW. MAYBE CHANGING *SHAPE*, TOO.
FOR ALL WE KNOW, THE *WALLS* AROUND US AND THE *CONDUITS* OVER OUR HEADS COULD BE *SKRULLS* IN DISGUISE.
THERE MAY BE NO TIME TO WASTE...
...IF WE'RE GOING TO STOP THIS *BOMB*.
YES. IF.
VZZZZZ
GOT IT! I'M GETTING THE HANG OF THIS STUFF.
DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT PORTAL LEADS-- EXCEPT *DEEPER* INTO THE VESSEL.
AND IF *I* WERE TRYING TO KEEP A *NEGA-BOMB* SAFE INSIDE A METAL SHELL...
...*DEEPER* IS WHERE I'D PUT IT. *LET'S GO!*

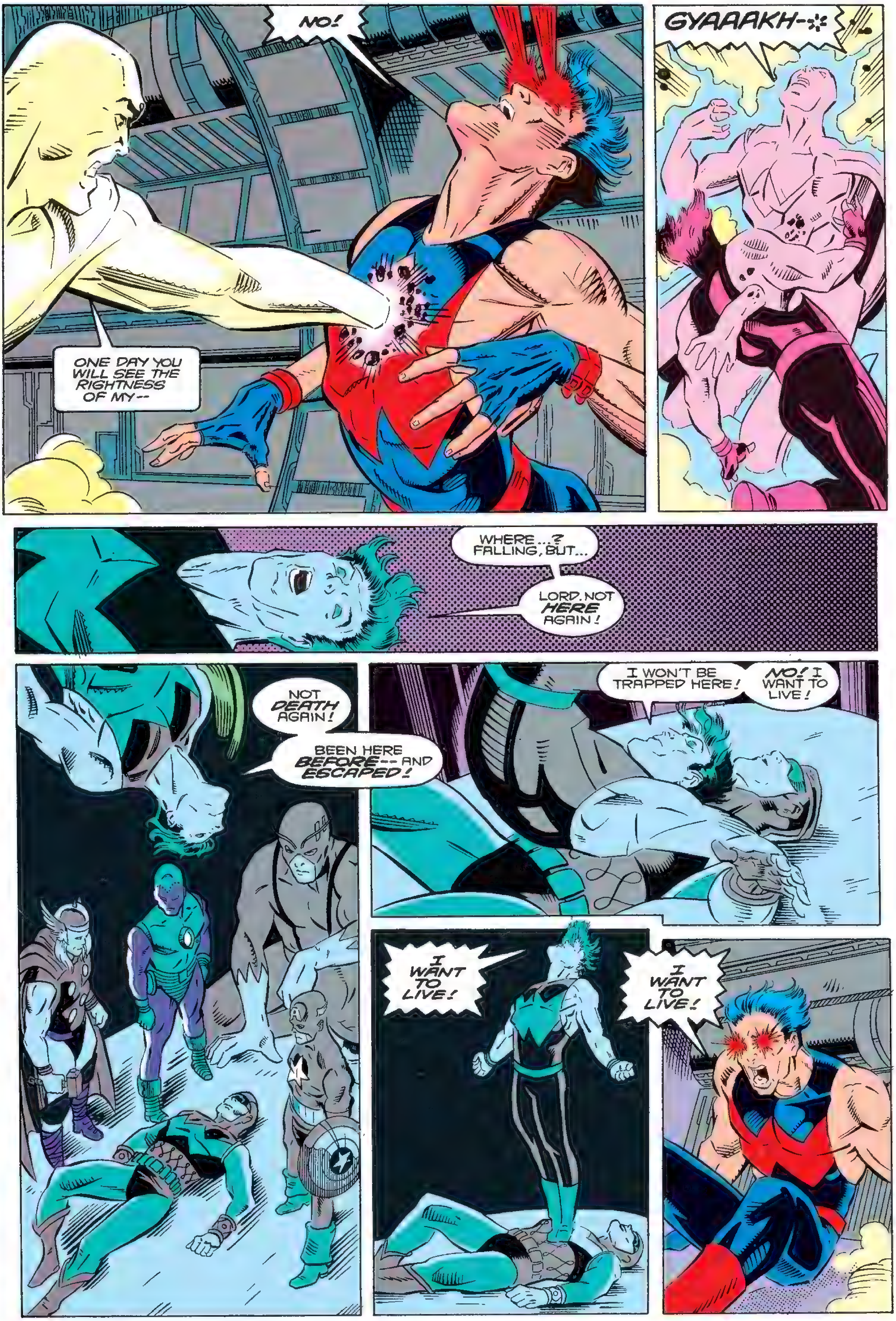
WE HAVE GONE FAR ENOUGH, WONDER MAN.
DON'T BE STUPID. THERE'S NOTHING HERE BUT POWER SUPPORTS, ALARM SYSTEMS, AND--
WE HAVE GONE FAR ENOUGH... BECAUSE WE WILL NOT DEACTIVATE THIS BOMB.
WHAT?! BILLIONS WILL DIE IF WE DON'T--
BILLIONS WILL DIE BECAUSE THEY MUST. WAR BETWEEN THE KREE AND SHI'AR IMPERILS US ALL.
IF THE SHI'AR CAN END THE WAR BY DESTROYING THE KREE GALAXY, IT IS EFFICIENT FOR US TO LET THEM.
FORGET IT! I'VE TOLD YOU-- I WON'T BE PARTY TO GENOCIDE!
LOGIC MUST PREVAIL OVER EMOTION, WONDER MAN.
AS I MUST PREVAIL OVER YOU.
CHWOKK

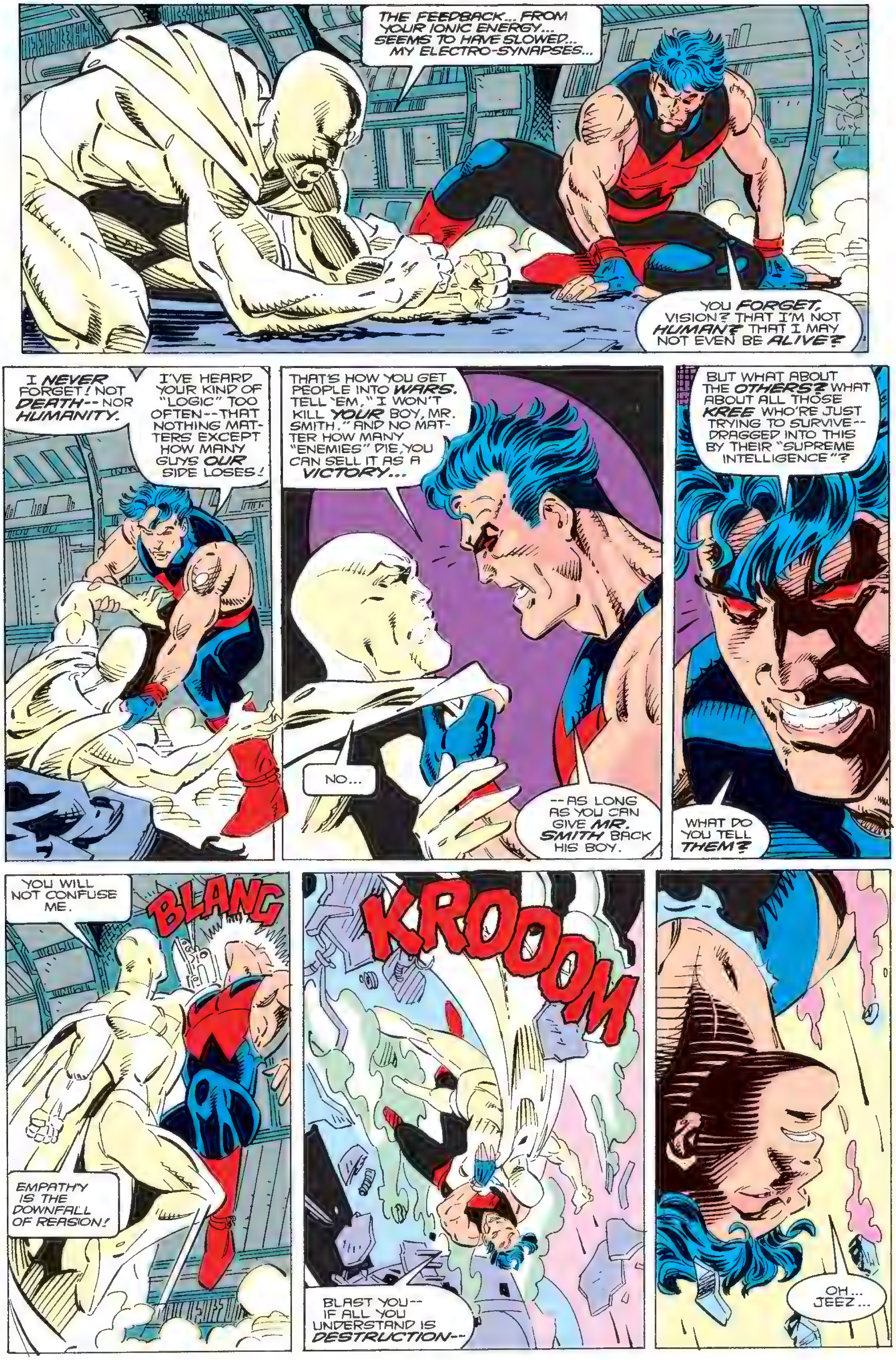

‹AH, THE LOOK ON *QUASAR'S* FACE WHEN I PLACED HIM IN SUCH AN *UNTENABLE* POSITION!›
‹EARTH'S *PROTECTOR--?* FAH--THE FOOL SACRIFICED THE KREE EMPIRE FOR THE SAKE OF HIS *OWN* SOLAR SYSTEM.›
‹QUASAR'S THREAT TO *SEAL* OUR RETURN ACCESS THROUGH EARTH'S *STARGATE* IS INCONSEQUENTIAL--›
‹--THERE ARE *OTHER* STARGATES AVAILABLE TO US FOR OUR ESCAPE!›
‹PITY POOR *K'LRT,* THE *SUPER SKRULL*-- HE WAS SACRIFICED FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF THE SKRULL EMPIRE!›*
*SEE QUASAR #34 AGAIN.
‹CAPTAIN! THE TWO SCOUTS WHO WERE TRYING TO LOCATE THE INTRUDERS--WE HAVE LOST CONTACT WITH THEM!›
‹*HAVE* WE, NOW?›
‹THEN SEND OUT A *FORCE! FIND* THOSE INTRUDERS--AND *OBLITERATE* THEM!›

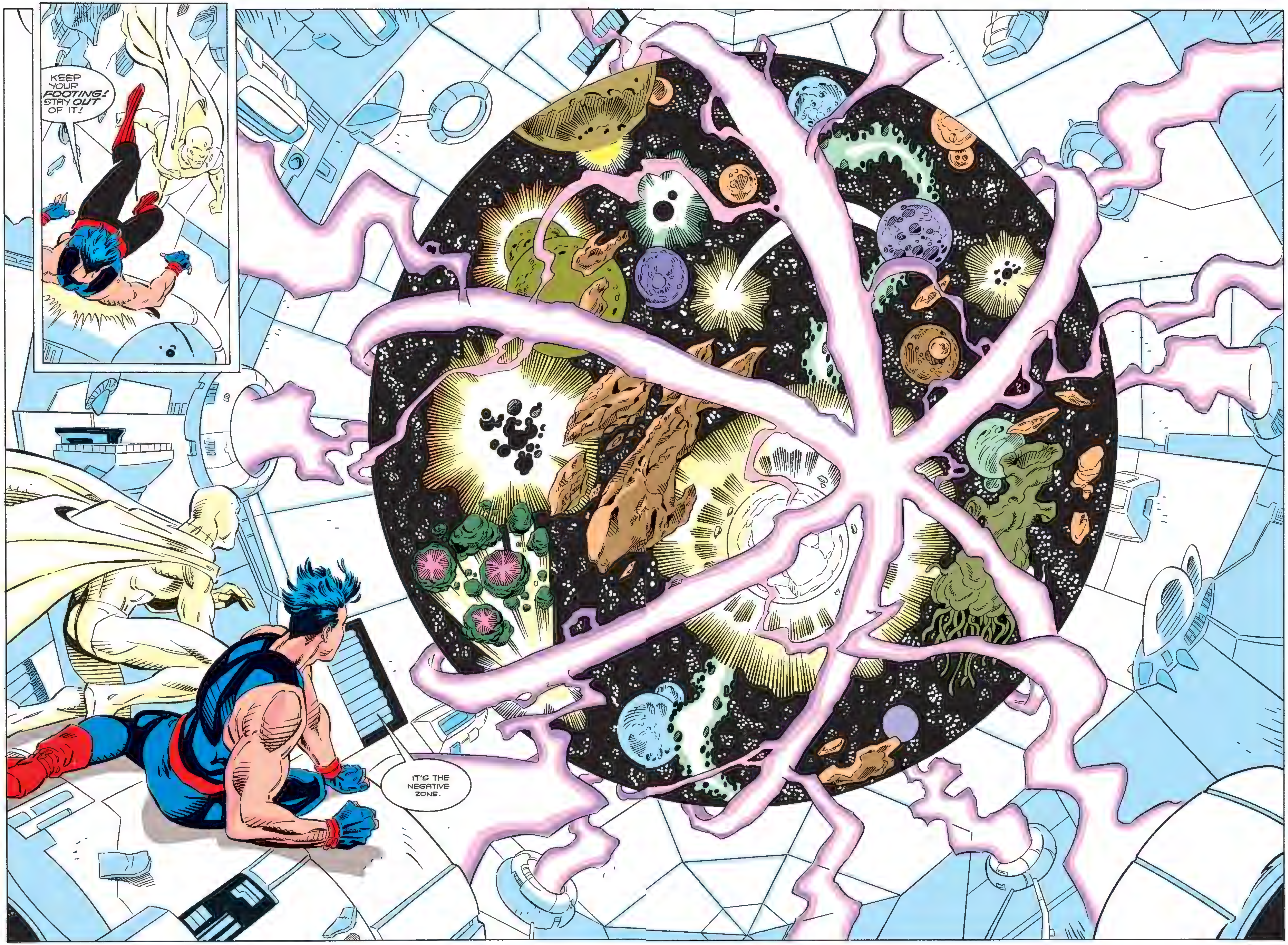

SOMEWHERE IN IMPERIAL SHI'AR SPACE...
QUASAR SAID *WHAT?!*
THE *BOMB* GOT THROUGH THE *STAR-GATE!*
IT COULD DESTROY THE *KREE GALAXY* ANY MOMENT NOW--
--WITH THE REST OF THE *AVENGERS* TRAPPED IN THE BLAST!*
* BY NOW YOU SHOULD HAVE QUASAR #34 MEMORIZED.
IF THE *SKRULLS* HAVE CONTROL OF THE BOMB, *NOTHING* WILL STOP THEM FROM DETONATING IT! DO YOU WISH TO *DIE* WITH YOUR COMRADES?
UH... YOU KNOW SOME-THING, GUYS...
...*LILANDRA* DOES HAVE A *POINT.*
WILL YOU LET THEM *DIE, STARFOX?* *CAPTAIN AMERICA... IRON MAN... SERSI... HAWK-EYE... BLACK KNIGHT... HERCULES... CRYSTAL...*
I DIDN'T *SAY--*
AND *VISION*-- AND *WONDER MAN* --TRAPPED IN THAT *BOMB?* WILL YOU LET THEM *DIE?*
COULD YOU LIVE WITH YOUR-SELF IF *YOU* SURVIVED--BY ABANDONING *THEM?*
NO! I NEVER SAID *ANYTHING* ABOUT ABANDON-ING THEM!
I JUST SAID LILANDRA HAS A *POINT.* THAT'S ALL.

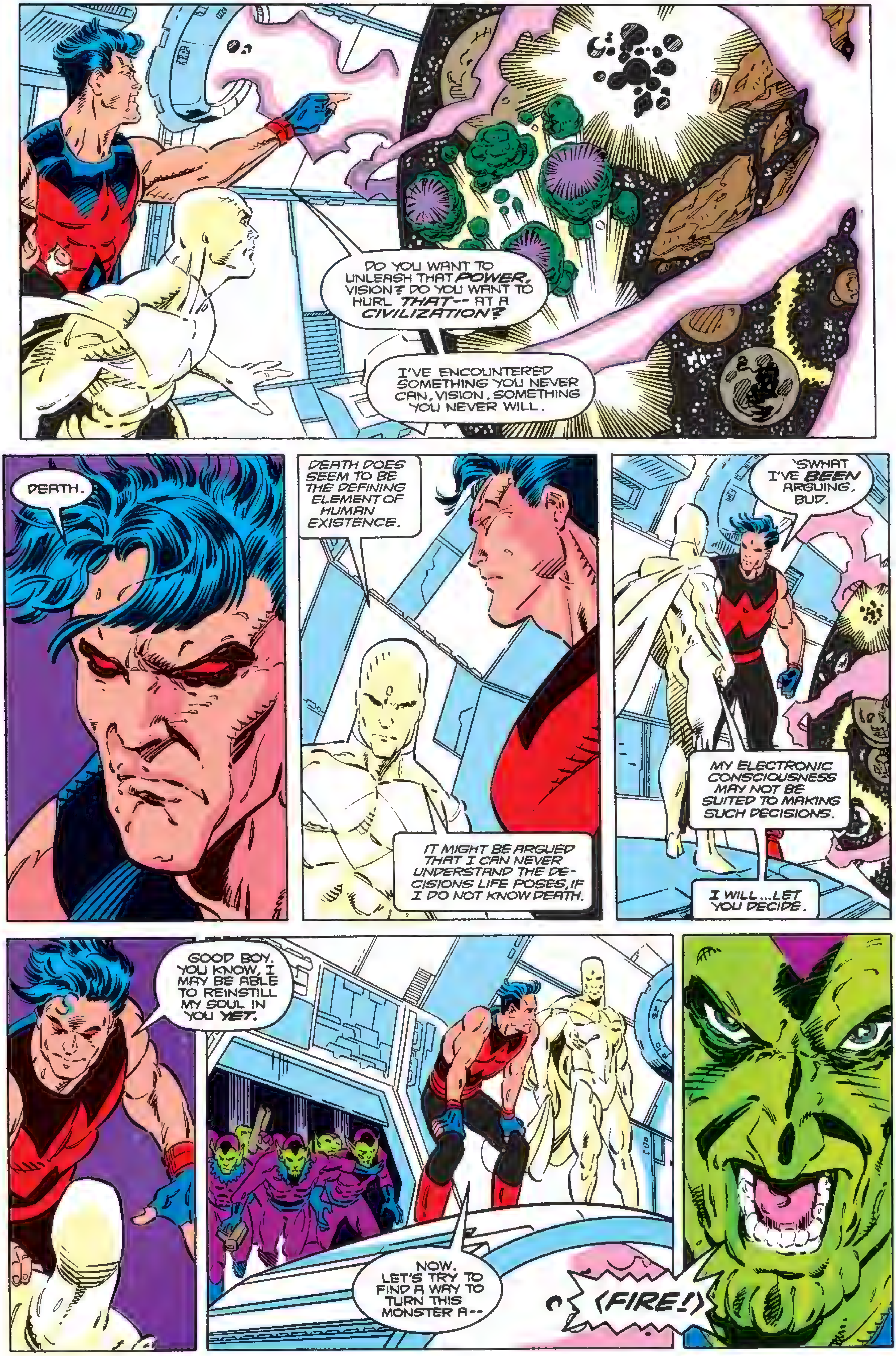

SOMEWHERE IN KREE SPACE...
BLIP BLIP
SOMETHING OUT THERE.
LET'S CHECK IT OUT.
ALTERING COURSE... *THERE*... DEAD AHEAD NOW.
DEATHBIRD WAS RIGHT. IT'S THE NEGA-BOMB. *
* NOPE. *THIS* TIME SEE CAPTAIN AMERICA #400.
FINE. BUT NOW THAT WE'VE FOUND IT...
...HOW DO WE *STOP* IT?


THE DESTRUCTION OF THE KREE IS THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE TENSIONS THAT IMPERIL THE UNIVERSE-- PARTICULARLY OUR SOLAR SYSTEM.
GENOCIDE IS NEVER THE "BEST SOLUTION"!
WHATEVER SAVES THE MOST LIVES IS THE BEST SOLUTION!
YOU SENTIMENTALIZE THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE.
ONE MUST EXAMINE ONE'S CHOSEN AIMS AND CHOOSE WHAT BEST SERVES THEM.
SINCE THE AVENGERS' AIM IS TO PROTECT THE EARTH...
...THEN WHATEVER REMOVES A POSSIBLE THREAT TO EARTH...
...MUST BE!
NO.

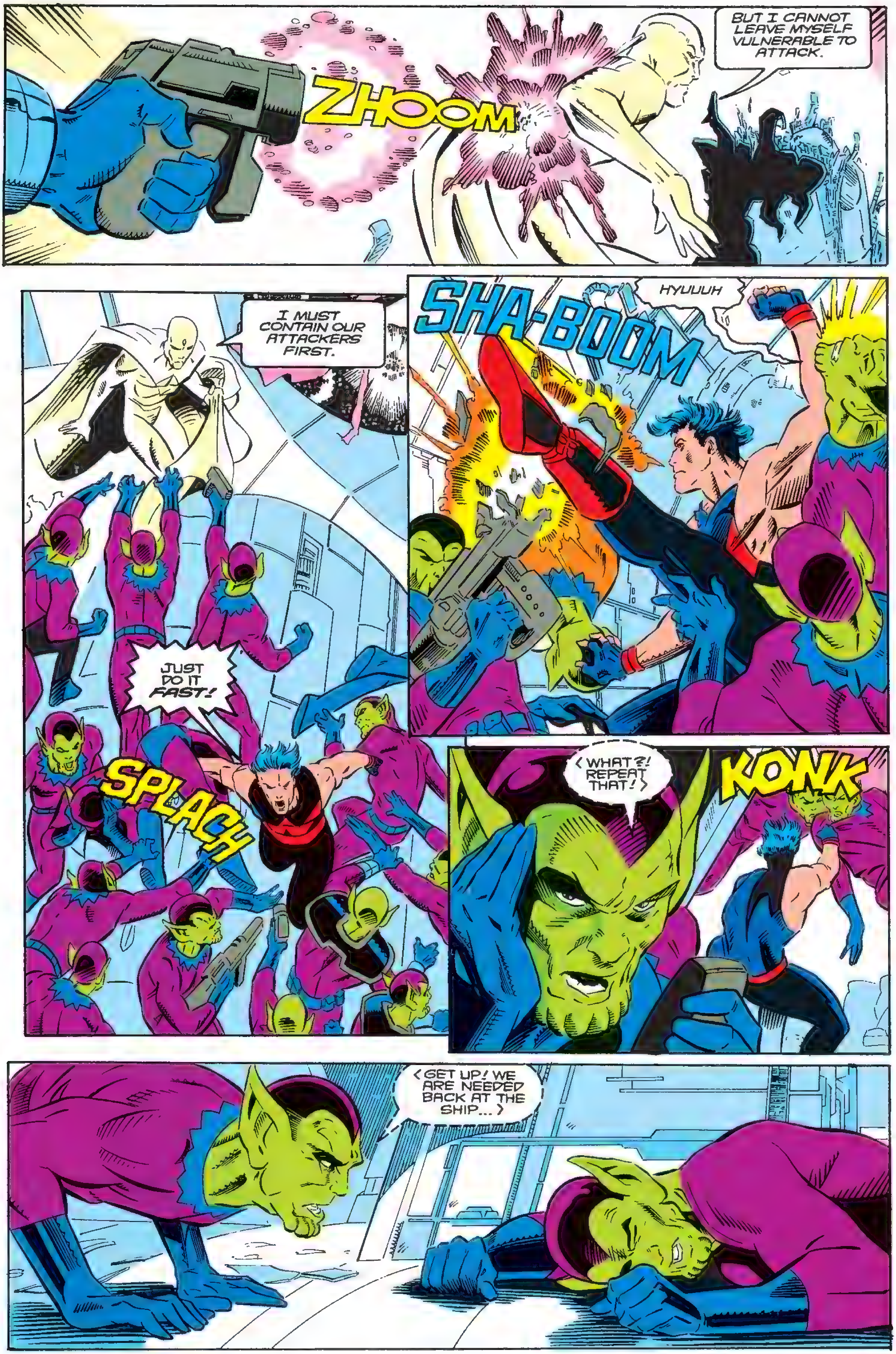

NO!
ONE DAY YOU WILL SEE THE RIGHTNESS OF MY--
GYAAAKH--!
WHERE...? FALLING, BUT...
LORD, NOT *HERE* AGAIN!
NOT *DEATH* AGAIN!
BEEN HERE *BEFORE*-- AND *ESCAPED!*
I WON'T BE TRAPPED HERE!
NO! I WANT TO LIVE!
I WANT TO LIVE!
I WANT TO LIVE!

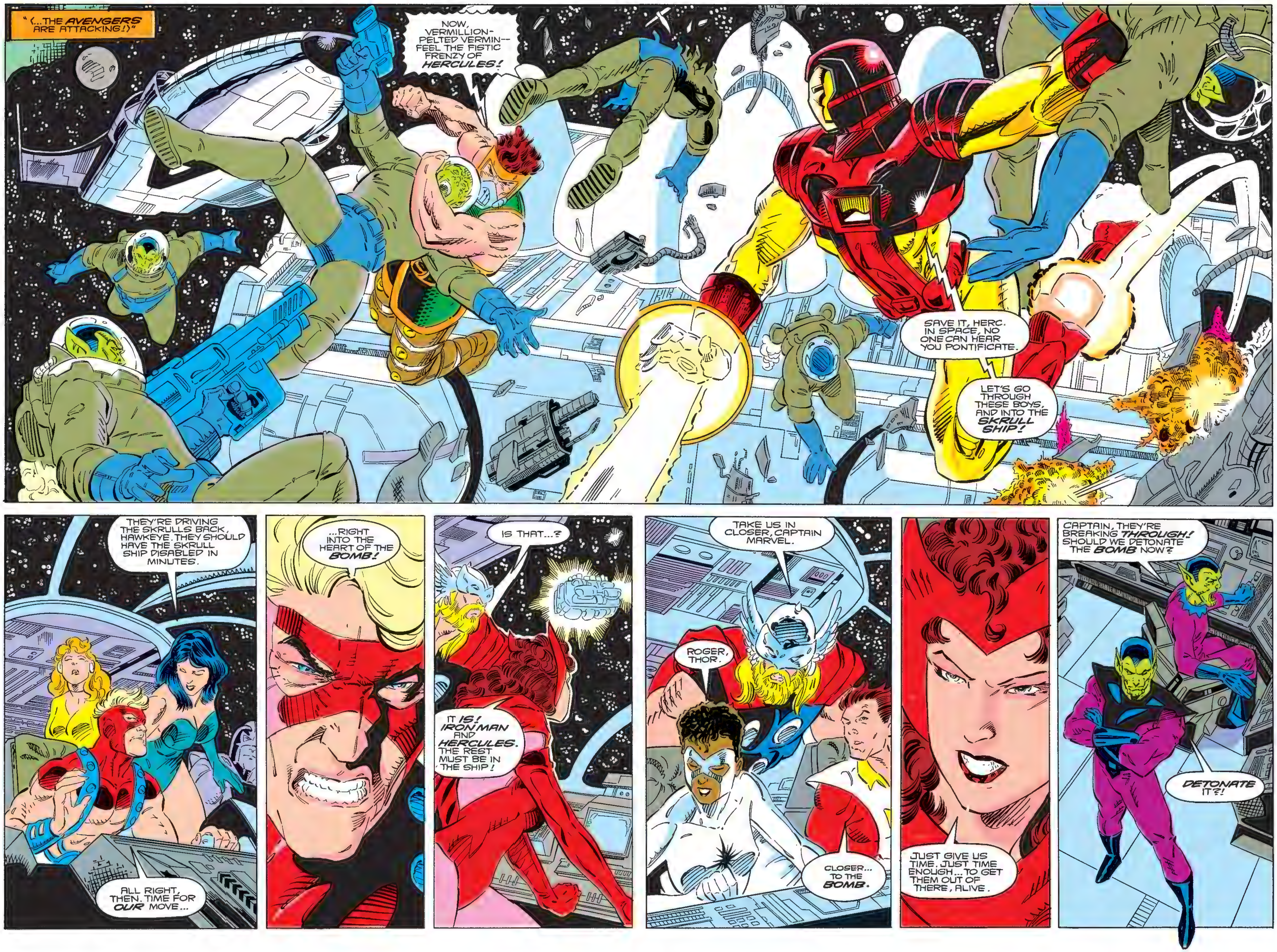

THE FEEDBACK... FROM YOUR IONIC ENERGY... SEEMS TO HAVE SLOWED... MY ELECTRO-SYNAPSES...
YOU FORGET, VISION? THAT I'M NOT HUMAN? THAT I MAY NOT EVEN BE ALIVE?
I NEVER FORGET! NOT DEATH-- NOR HUMANITY.
I'VE HEARD YOUR KIND OF "LOGIC" TOO OFTEN--THAT NOTHING MATTERS EXCEPT HOW MANY GUYS OUR SIDE LOSES!
THAT'S HOW YOU GET PEOPLE INTO WARS. TELL 'EM, "I WON'T KILL YOUR BOY, MR. SMITH." AND NO MATTER HOW MANY "ENEMIES" DIE, YOU CAN SELL IT AS A VICTORY...
NO...
--AS LONG AS YOU CAN GIVE MR. SMITH BACK HIS BOY.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS? WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE KREE WHO'RE JUST TRYING TO SURVIVE-- DRAGGED INTO THIS BY THEIR "SUPREME INTELLIGENCE"?
WHAT DO YOU TELL THEM?
YOU WILL NOT CONFUSE ME.
BLANG
EMPATHY IS THE DOWNFALL OF REASON!
KROOOOM
BLAST YOU-- IF ALL YOU UNDERSTAND IS DESTRUCTION--
OH... JEEZ...

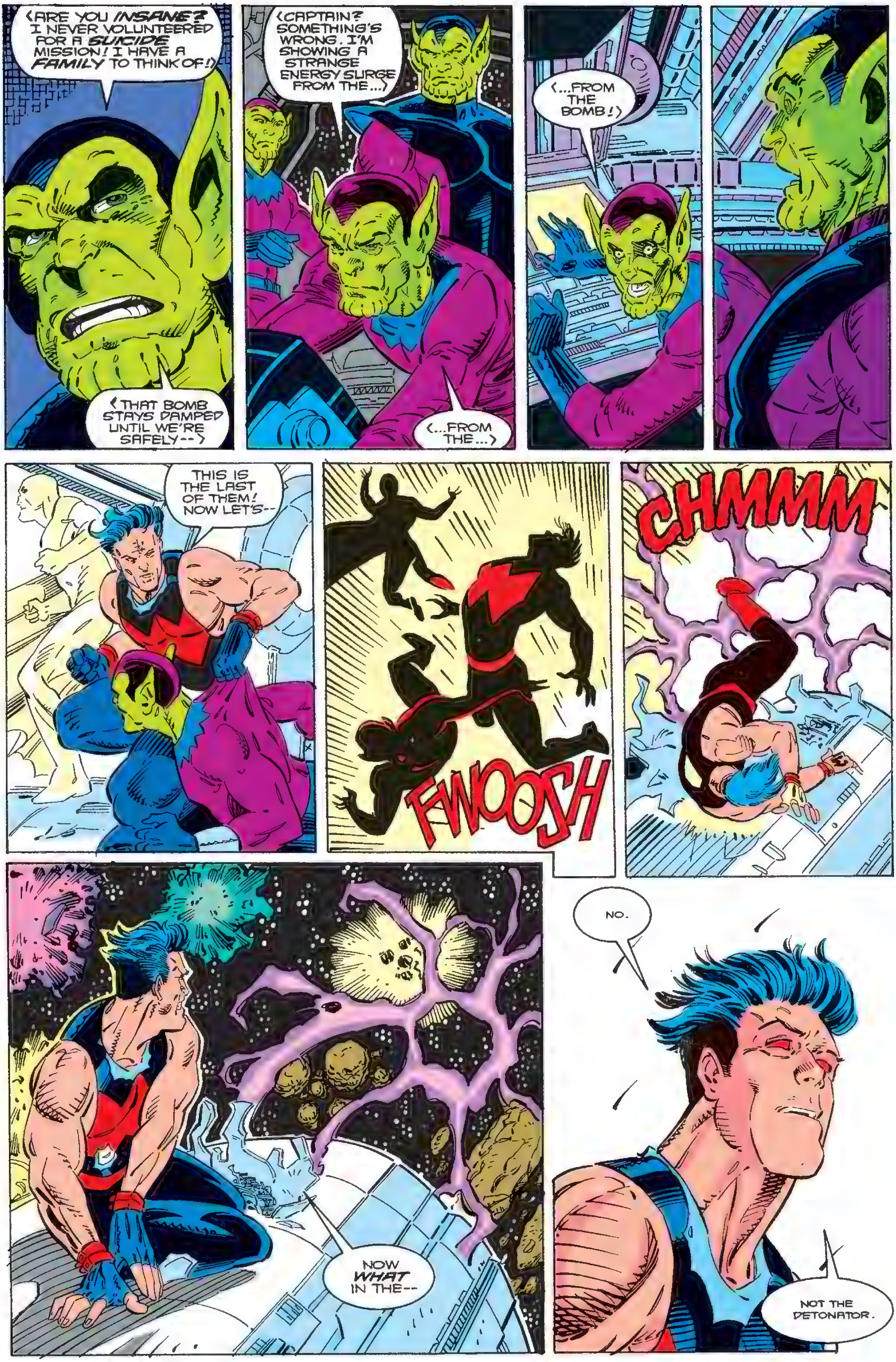

KEEP YOUR **FOOTING!** STAY **OUT** OF IT!
IT'S THE NEGATIVE ZONE.

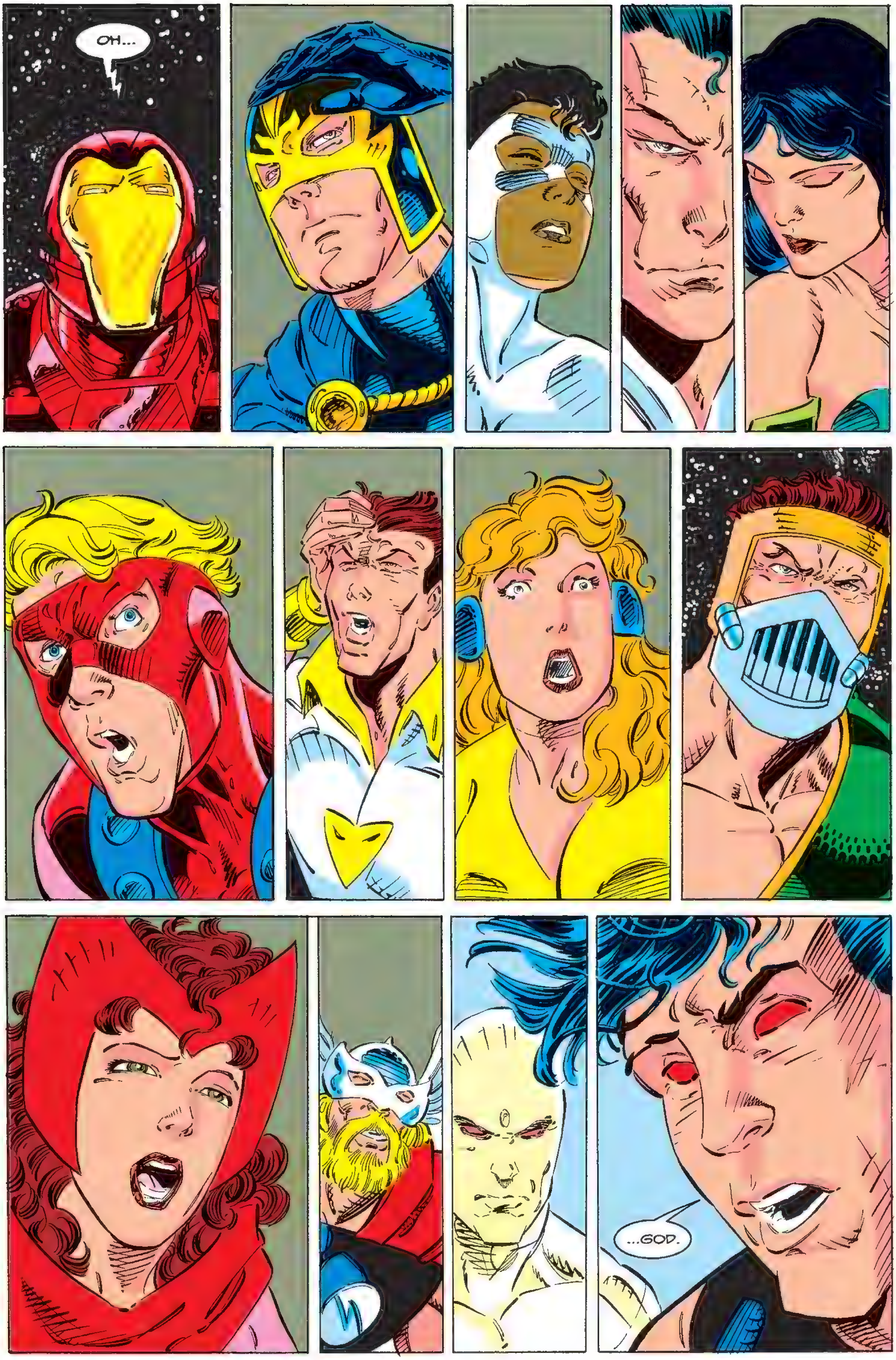

DO YOU WANT TO UNLEASH THAT *POWER*, VISION? DO YOU WANT TO HURL *THAT*-- AT A *CIVILIZATION?*
I'VE ENCOUNTERED SOMETHING YOU NEVER CAN, VISION. SOMETHING YOU NEVER WILL.
DEATH.
DEATH DOES SEEM TO BE THE DEFINING ELEMENT OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.
IT MIGHT BE ARGUED THAT I CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND THE DECISIONS LIFE POSES, IF I DO NOT KNOW DEATH.
'SWHAT I'VE *BEEN* ARGUING, BUD.
MY ELECTRONIC CONSCIOUSNESS MAY NOT BE SUITED TO MAKING SUCH DECISIONS.
I WILL... LET YOU DECIDE.
GOOD BOY. YOU KNOW, I MAY BE ABLE TO REINSTILL MY SOUL IN YOU *YET*.
NOW. LET'S TRY TO FIND A WAY TO TURN THIS MONSTER A--
(FIRE!)

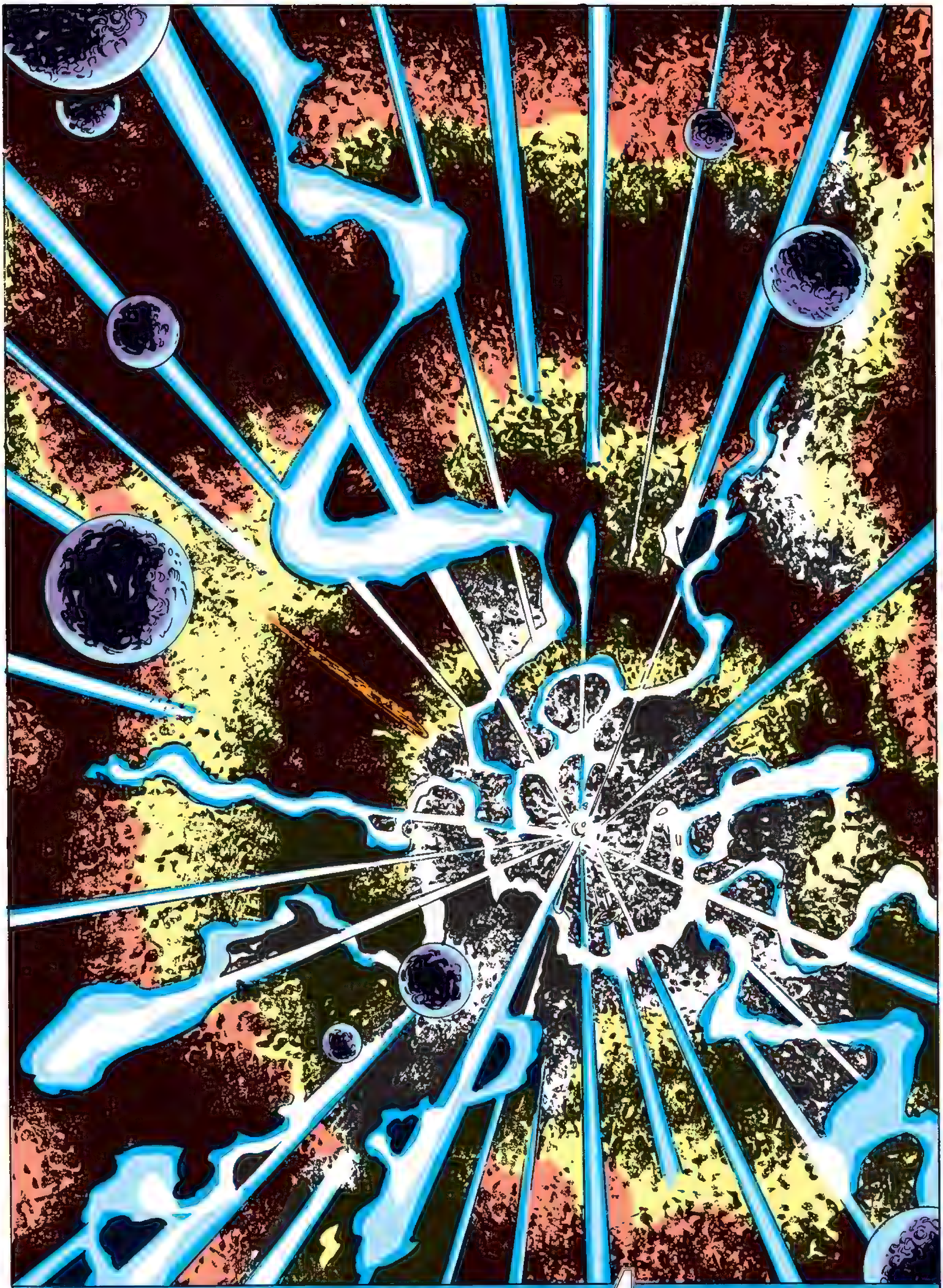
ZHOOM
NO! NOT NOW!
VISION! SHUT THIS BOMB DOWN!
‹FIRE! FIRE!›
BUT I DO NOT--
JUST DO IT!
PLAP
WHOK
SHRRAK
SURELY THE SKRULLS DO NOT WISH THIS DETONATED JUST YET. IF ENOUGH DAMAGE IS DONE TO THE CONTAINMENT MECHANISM, THEN THEY WILL BE FORCED TO--


ZHOOM
BUT I CANNOT LEAVE MYSELF VULNERABLE TO ATTACK.
I MUST CONTAIN OUR ATTACKERS FIRST.
JUST DO IT FAST!
SPLACH
SHA-BOOM
HYUUUH
<WHAT?! REPEAT THAT!>
KONK
<GET UP! WE ARE NEEDED BACK AT THE SHIP...>


"(...THE AVENGERS ARE ATTACKING!)"
NOW, VERMILLION-PELTED VERMIN--FEEL THE FISTIC FRENZY OF HERCULES!
SAVE IT, HERC. IN SPACE, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU PONTIFICATE.
LET'S GO THROUGH THESE BOYS, AND INTO THE SKRULL SHIP!
THEY'RE DRIVING THE SKRULLS BACK, HAWKEYE. THEY SHOULD HAVE THE SKRULL SHIP DISABLED IN MINUTES.
ALL RIGHT, THEN. TIME FOR OUR MOVE...
...RIGHT INTO THE HEART OF THE BOMB!
IS THAT...?
IT IS! IRON MAN AND HERCULES. THE REST MUST BE IN THE SHIP!
TAKE US IN CLOSER, CAPTAIN MARVEL.
ROGER, THOR.
CLOSER... TO THE BOMB.
JUST GIVE US TIME. JUST TIME ENOUGH... TO GET THEM OUT OF THERE, ALIVE.
CAPTAIN, THEY'RE BREAKING THROUGH! SHOULD WE DETONATE THE BOMB NOW?
DETONATE IT?!

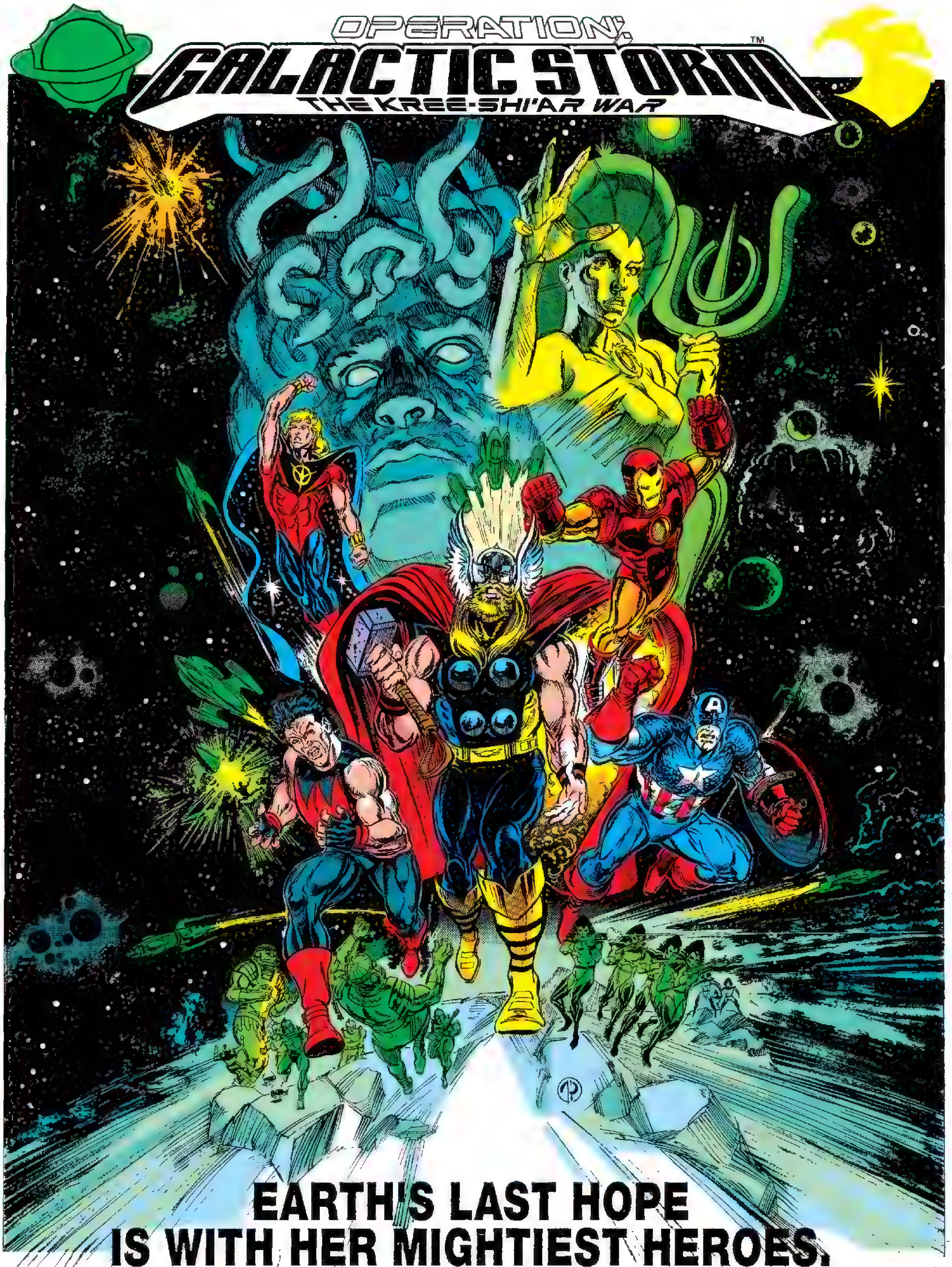

‹ARE YOU *INSANE?* I NEVER VOLUNTEERED FOR A *SUICIDE* MISSION! I HAVE A *FAMILY* TO THINK OF!›
‹THAT BOMB STAYS DAMPED UNTIL WE'RE SAFELY--›
‹CAPTAIN? SOMETHING'S WRONG. I'M SHOWING A STRANGE ENERGY SURGE FROM THE...›
‹...FROM THE...›
‹...FROM THE BOMB!›
THIS IS THE LAST OF THEM! NOW LET'S--
FWOOSH
CHMMM
NOW *WHAT* IN THE--
NO.
NOT THE DETONATOR.


OH...
...GOD.



TO BE CONCLUDED IN AVENGERS #347!
AND IN WONDER MAN # 10...

DEALING WITH DEATH...


OPERATION:
GALACTIC STORM™
THE KREE-SHI'AR WAR

EARTH'S LAST HOPE IS WITH HER MIGHTIEST HEROES.

AVENGERS THE MIGHTY THOR IRON MAN CAPTAIN AMERICA
QUASAR WONDER MAN AVENGERS WEST COAST
A CROSSOVER OF UNIVERSAL PROPORTIONS BEGINNING IN JANUARY

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HOUSE AD BY TOM PALMER

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347
MAY
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE FINAL CHAPTER OF
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 19
AVENGERS
NOT EVEN THE AVENGERS CAN STOP...
...THE DEATH OF A GALAXY
EPTING • PALMER

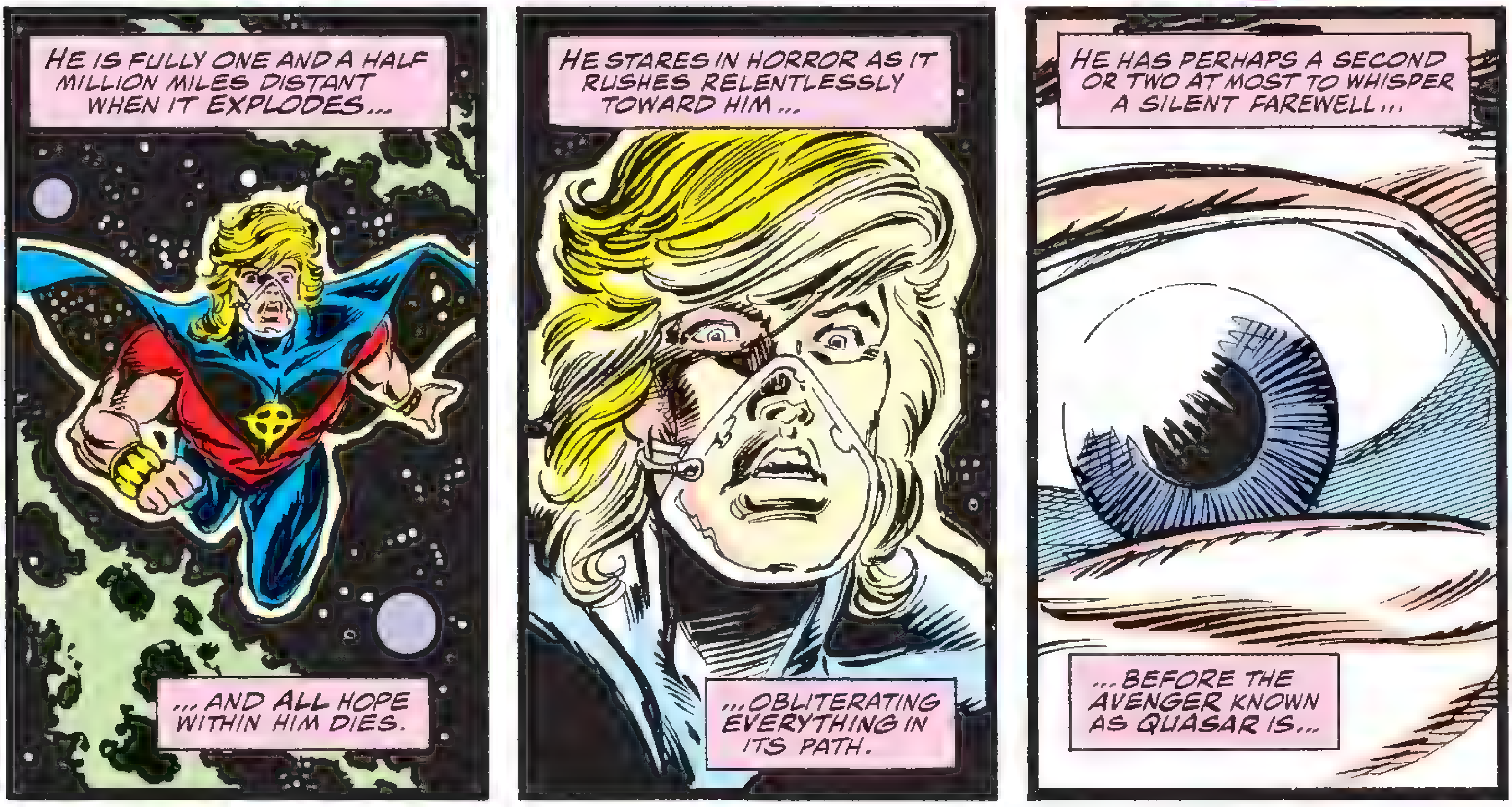
THE NEGA-BOMB — AN ANTI-MATTER DEVICE CAPABLE OF SPEWING FORTH DEADLY RADIATION AT TRANS-LIGHT SPEED — WAS BUILT BY THE ALIEN **SHI'AR** TO END THEIR MONTHS OLD CONFLICT WITH THE **KREE.** BUT WHEN THE SHI'AR EMPRESS DECIDED NOT TO EMPLOY THE DEVICE, THE KREE'S ANCIENT ENEMIES, THE SKRULLS, STOLE THE BOMB. NOW IT'S BEEN DETONATED AND THE AVENGERS HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN THE BLAST. . .!

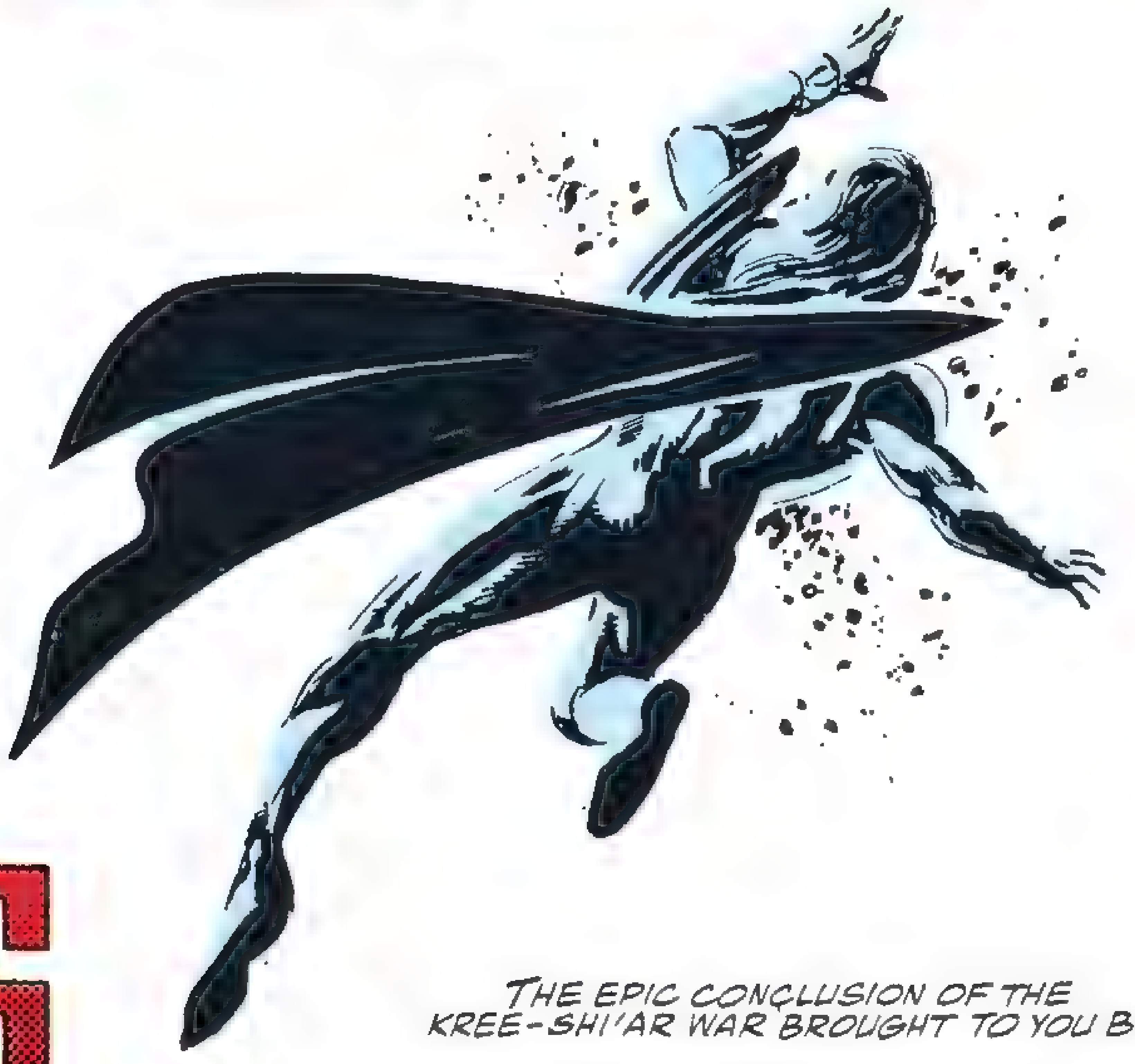
STAN LEE PRESENTS. . .

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

PART 19

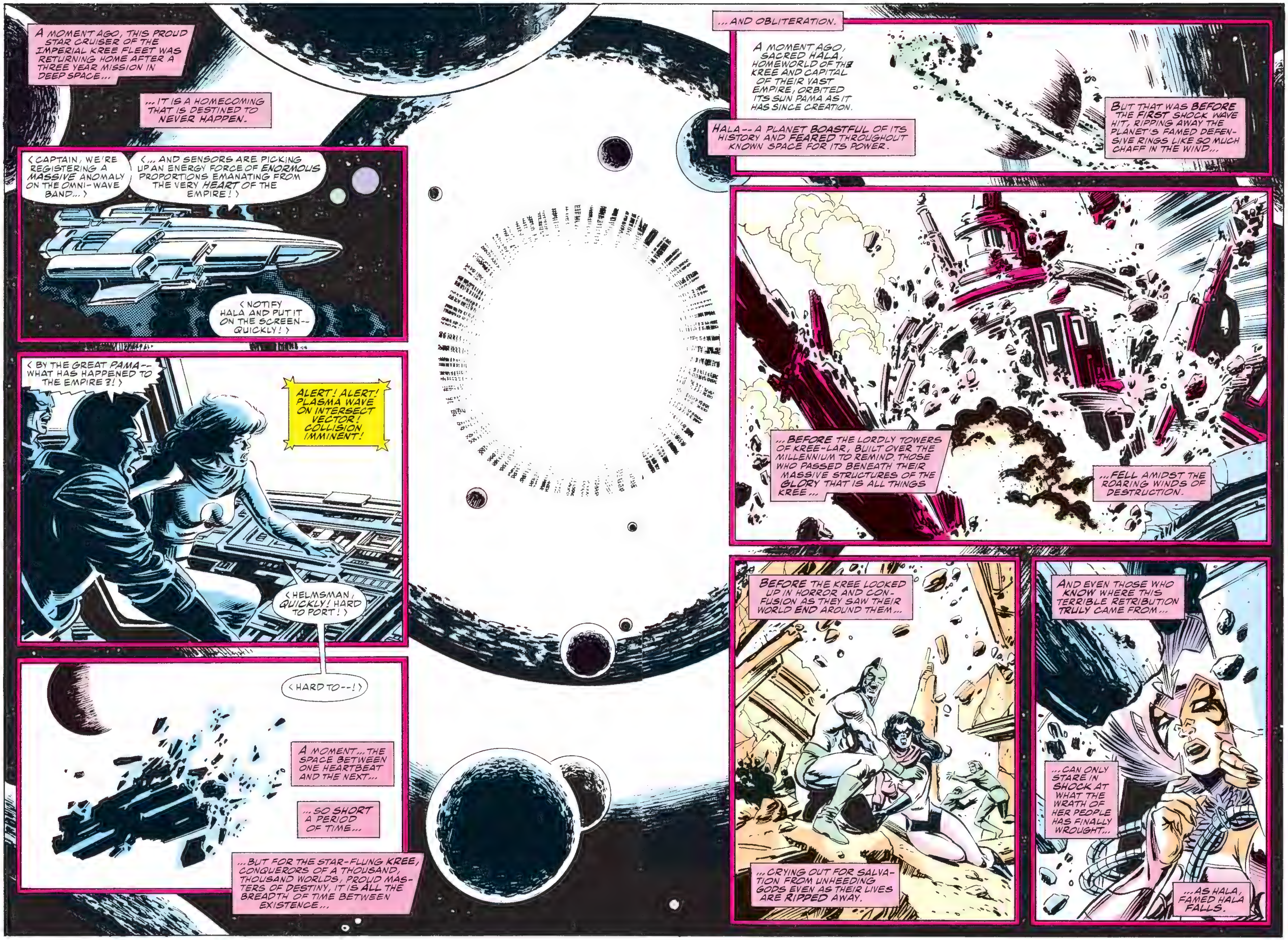
THE AVENGERS

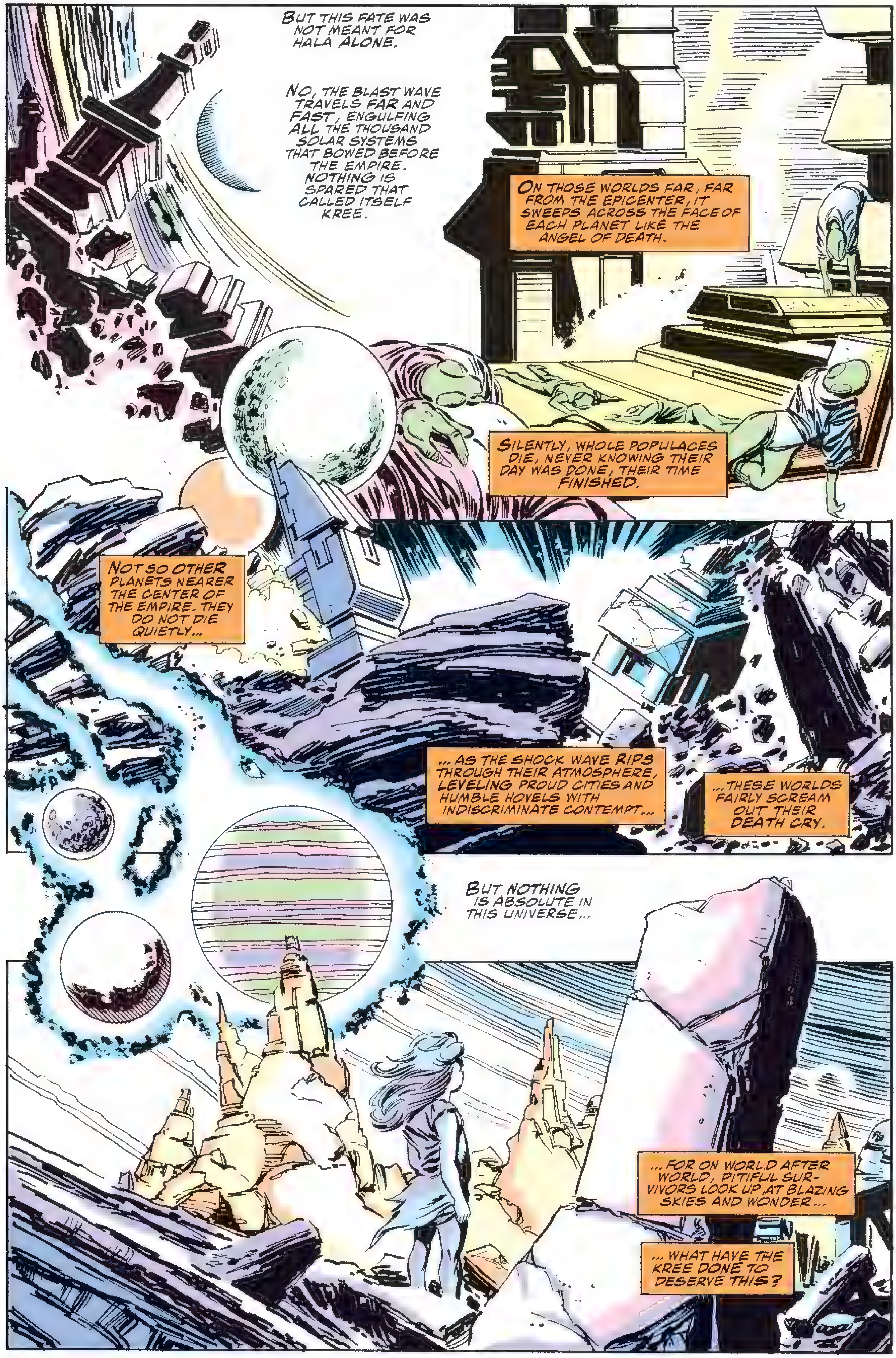

HE IS FULLY ONE AND A HALF MILLION MILES DISTANT WHEN IT EXPLODES...
...AND ALL HOPE WITHIN HIM DIES.
HE STARES IN HORROR AS IT RUSHES RELENTLESSLY TOWARD HIM...
...OBLITERATING EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH.
HE HAS PERHAPS A SECOND OR TWO AT MOST TO WHISPER A SILENT FAREWELL...
...BEFORE THE AVENGER KNOWN AS QUASAR IS...

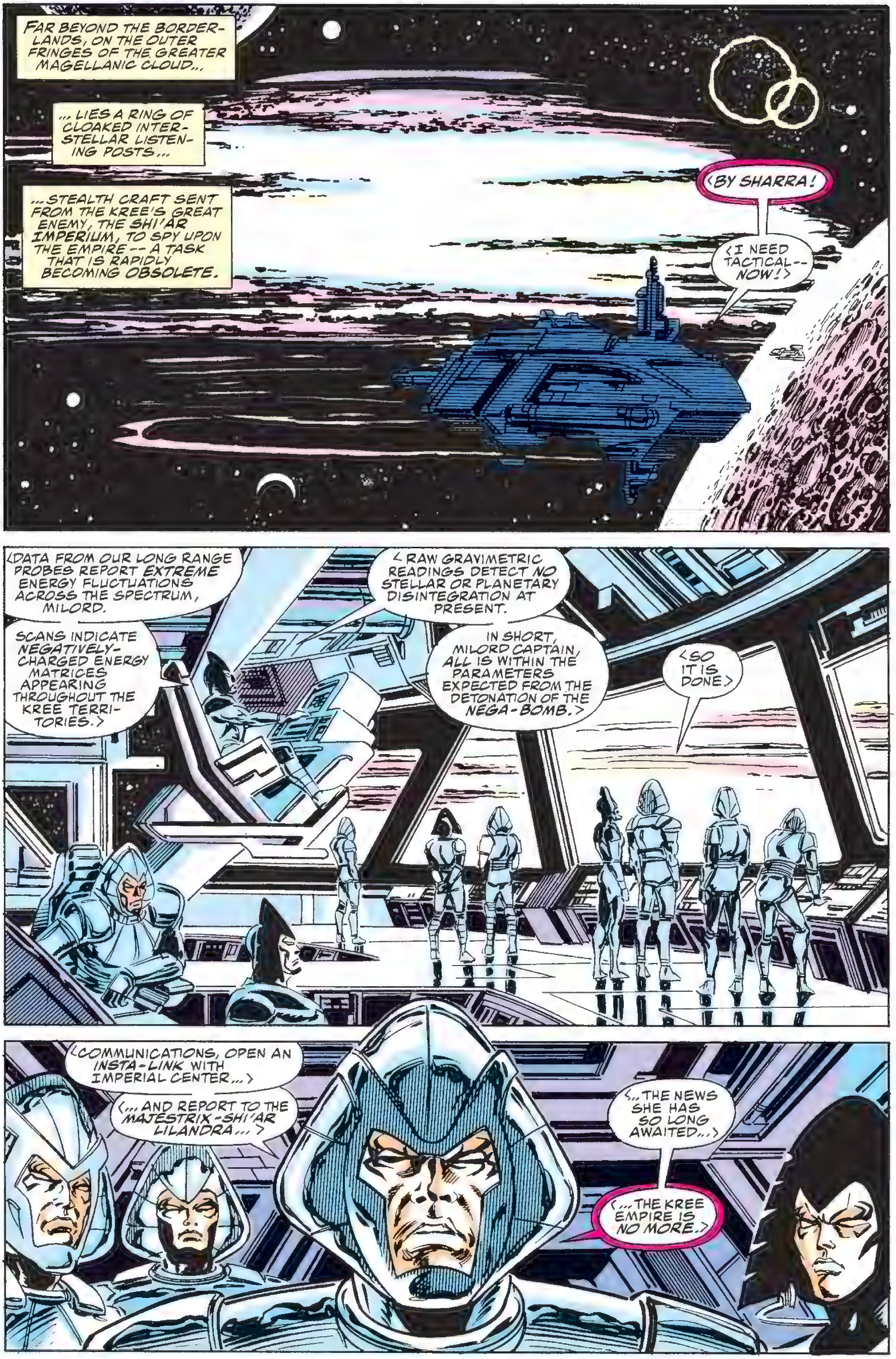


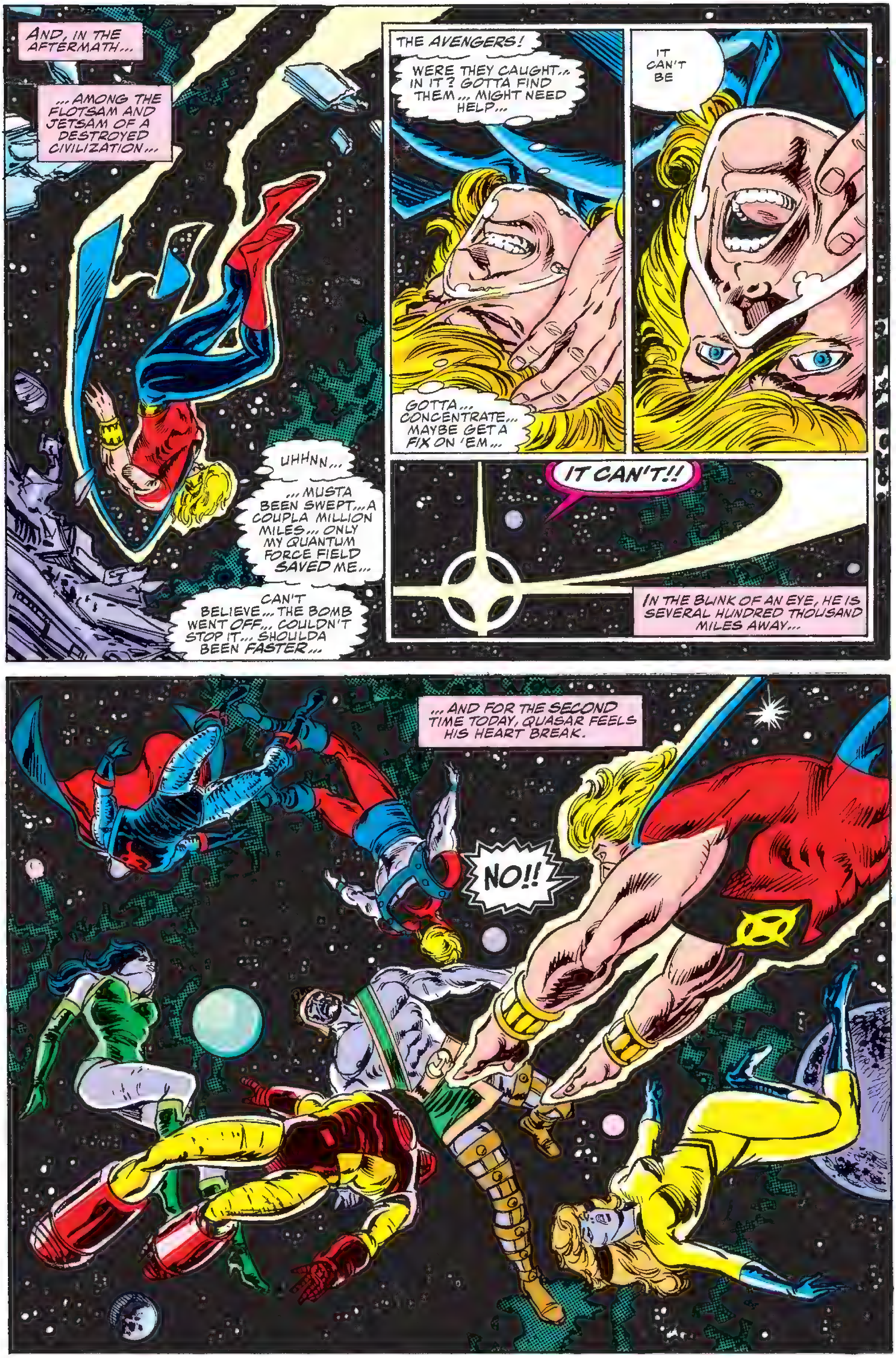
empire's end

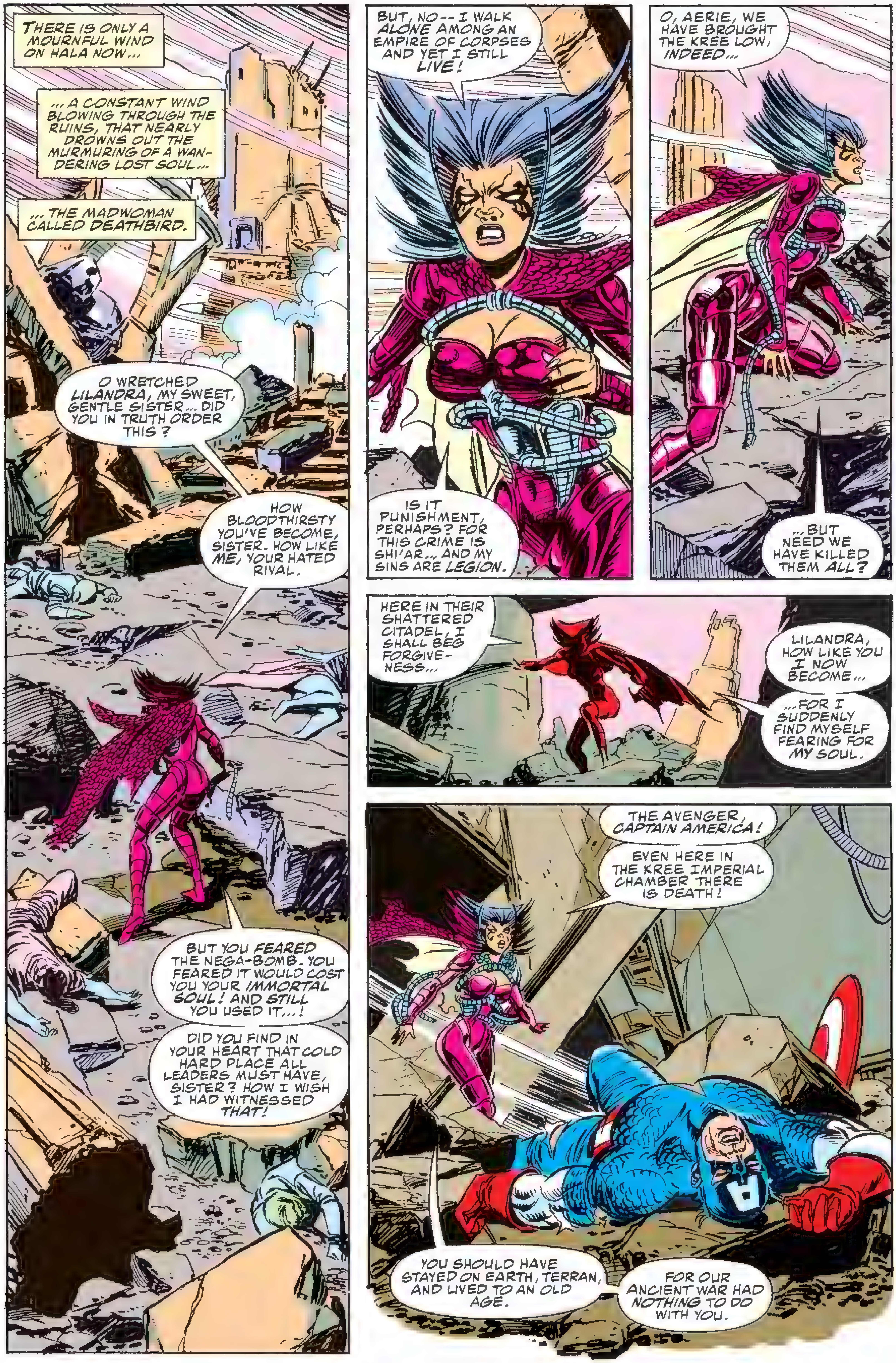
THE EPIC CONCLUSION OF THE KREE-SHI'AR WAR BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
BOB HARRAS – WRITER
STEVE EPTING – PENCILER
TOM PALMER – INKER
GINA GOING – COLORIST
BILL OAKLEY
MICHAEL HIGGINS – LETTERERS
RALPH MACCHIO – EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO – EDITOR IN CHIEF

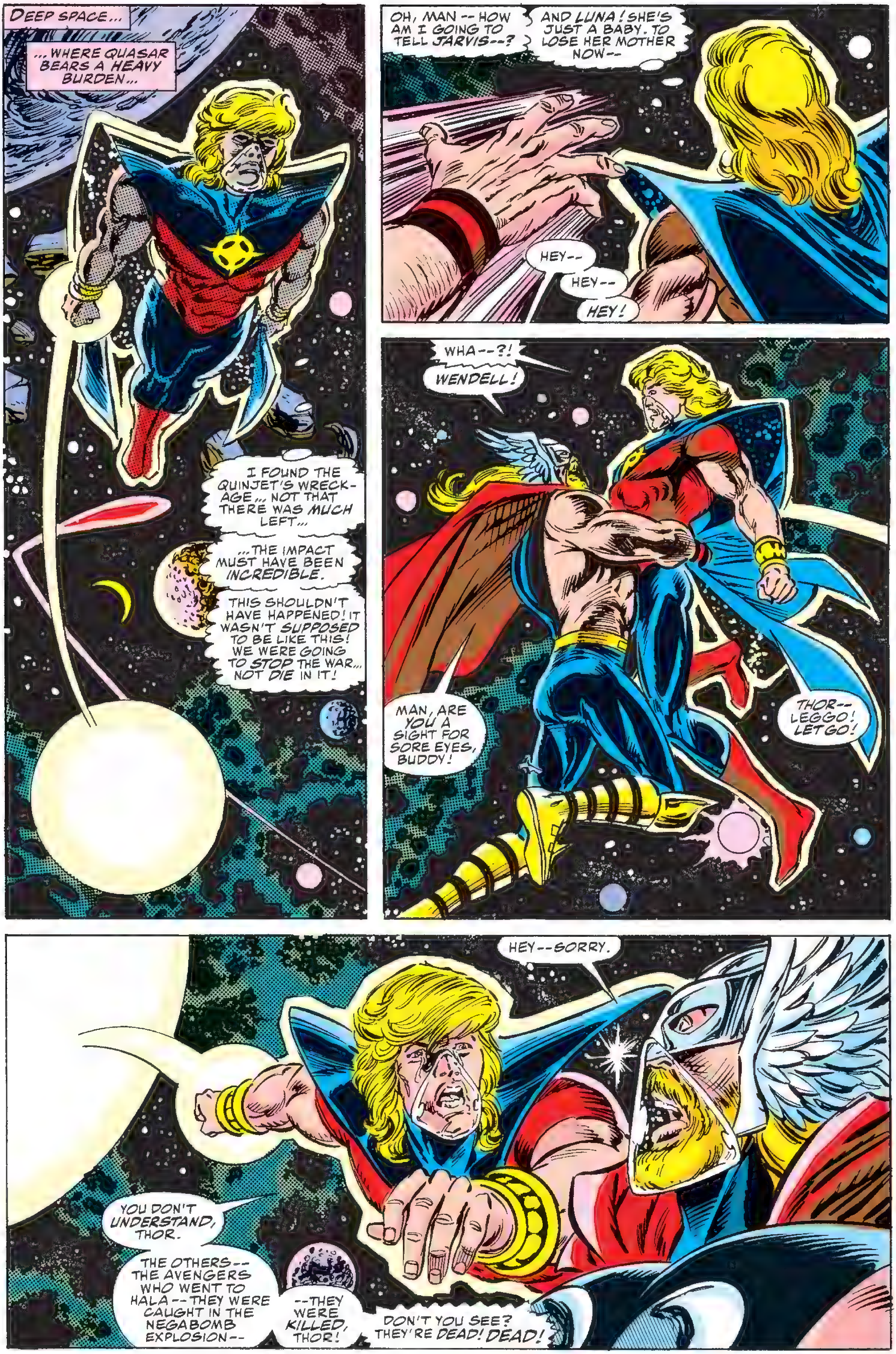

A MOMENT AGO, THIS PROUD STAR CRUISER OF THE IMPERIAL KREE FLEET WAS RETURNING HOME AFTER A THREE YEAR MISSION IN DEEP SPACE...
...IT IS A HOMECOMING THAT IS DESTINED TO NEVER HAPPEN.
< CAPTAIN, WE'RE REGISTERING A MASSIVE ANOMALY ON THE OMNI-WAVE BAND... >
< ...AND SENSORS ARE PICKING UP AN ENERGY FORCE OF ENORMOUS PROPORTIONS EMANATING FROM THE VERY HEART OF THE EMPIRE! >
< NOTIFY HALA AND PUT IT ON THE SCREEN-- QUICKLY! >
< BY THE GREAT PAMA-- WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE EMPIRE?! >
ALERT! ALERT! PLASMA WAVE ON INTERSECT VECTOR! COLLISION IMMINENT!
< HELMSMAN, QUICKLY! HARD TO PORT! >
< HARD TO--! >
A MOMENT... THE SPACE BETWEEN ONE HEARTBEAT AND THE NEXT...
...SO SHORT A PERIOD OF TIME...
...BUT FOR THE STAR-FLUNG KREE, CONQUERORS OF A THOUSAND, THOUSAND WORLDS, PROUD MASTERS OF DESTINY, IT IS ALL THE BREADTH OF TIME BETWEEN EXISTENCE...
...AND OBLITERATION.
A MOMENT AGO, SACRED HALA, HOMEWORLD OF THE KREE AND CAPITAL OF THEIR VAST EMPIRE, ORBITED ITS SUN PAMA AS IT HAS SINCE CREATION.
HALA--A PLANET BOASTFUL OF ITS HISTORY AND FEARED THROUGHOUT KNOWN SPACE FOR ITS POWER.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE FIRST SHOCK WAVE HIT, RIPPING AWAY THE PLANET'S FAMED DEFENSIVE RINGS LIKE SO MUCH CHAFF IN THE WIND...
...BEFORE THE LORDLY TOWERS OF KREE-LAR, BUILT OVER THE MILLENNIUM TO REMIND THOSE WHO PASSED BENEATH THEIR MASSIVE STRUCTURES OF THE GLORY THAT IS ALL THINGS KREE...
...FELL AMIDST THE ROARING WINDS OF DESTRUCTION.
BEFORE THE KREE LOOKED UP IN HORROR AND CONFUSION AS THEY SAW THEIR WORLD END AROUND THEM...
...CRYING OUT FOR SALVATION FROM UNHEEDING GODS EVEN AS THEIR LIVES ARE RIPPED AWAY.
AND EVEN THOSE WHO KNOW WHERE THIS TERRIBLE RETRIBUTION TRULY CAME FROM...
...CAN ONLY STARE IN SHOCK AT WHAT THE WRATH OF HER PEOPLE HAS FINALLY WROUGHT...
...AS HALA, FAMED HALA FALLS.

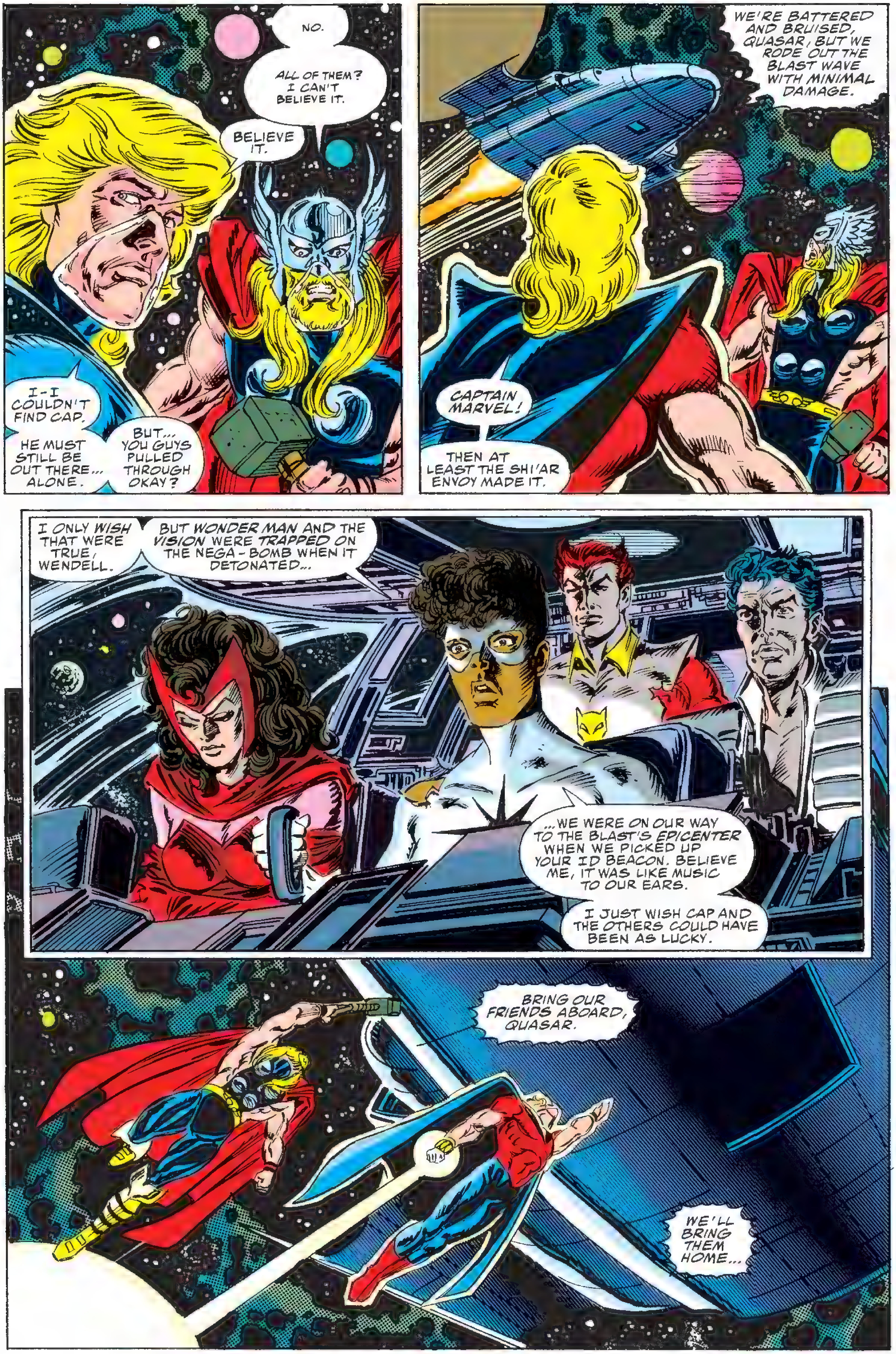

BUT THIS FATE WAS NOT MEANT FOR HALA ALONE.
NO, THE BLAST WAVE TRAVELS FAR AND FAST, ENGULFING ALL THE THOUSAND SOLAR SYSTEMS THAT BOWED BEFORE THE EMPIRE. NOTHING IS SPARED THAT CALLED ITSELF KREE.
ON THOSE WORLDS FAR, FAR FROM THE EPICENTER, IT SWEEPS ACROSS THE FACE OF EACH PLANET LIKE THE ANGEL OF DEATH.
SILENTLY, WHOLE POPULACES DIE, NEVER KNOWING THEIR DAY WAS DONE, THEIR TIME FINISHED.
NOT SO OTHER PLANETS NEARER THE CENTER OF THE EMPIRE. THEY DO NOT DIE QUIETLY...
...AS THE SHOCK WAVE RIPS THROUGH THEIR ATMOSPHERE, LEVELING PROUD CITIES AND HUMBLE HOVELS WITH INDISCRIMINATE CONTEMPT...
...THESE WORLDS FAIRLY SCREAM OUT THEIR DEATH CRY.
BUT NOTHING IS ABSOLUTE IN THIS UNIVERSE...
...FOR ON WORLD AFTER WORLD, PITIFUL SURVIVORS LOOK UP AT BLAZING SKIES AND WONDER...
...WHAT HAVE THE KREE DONE TO DESERVE THIS?

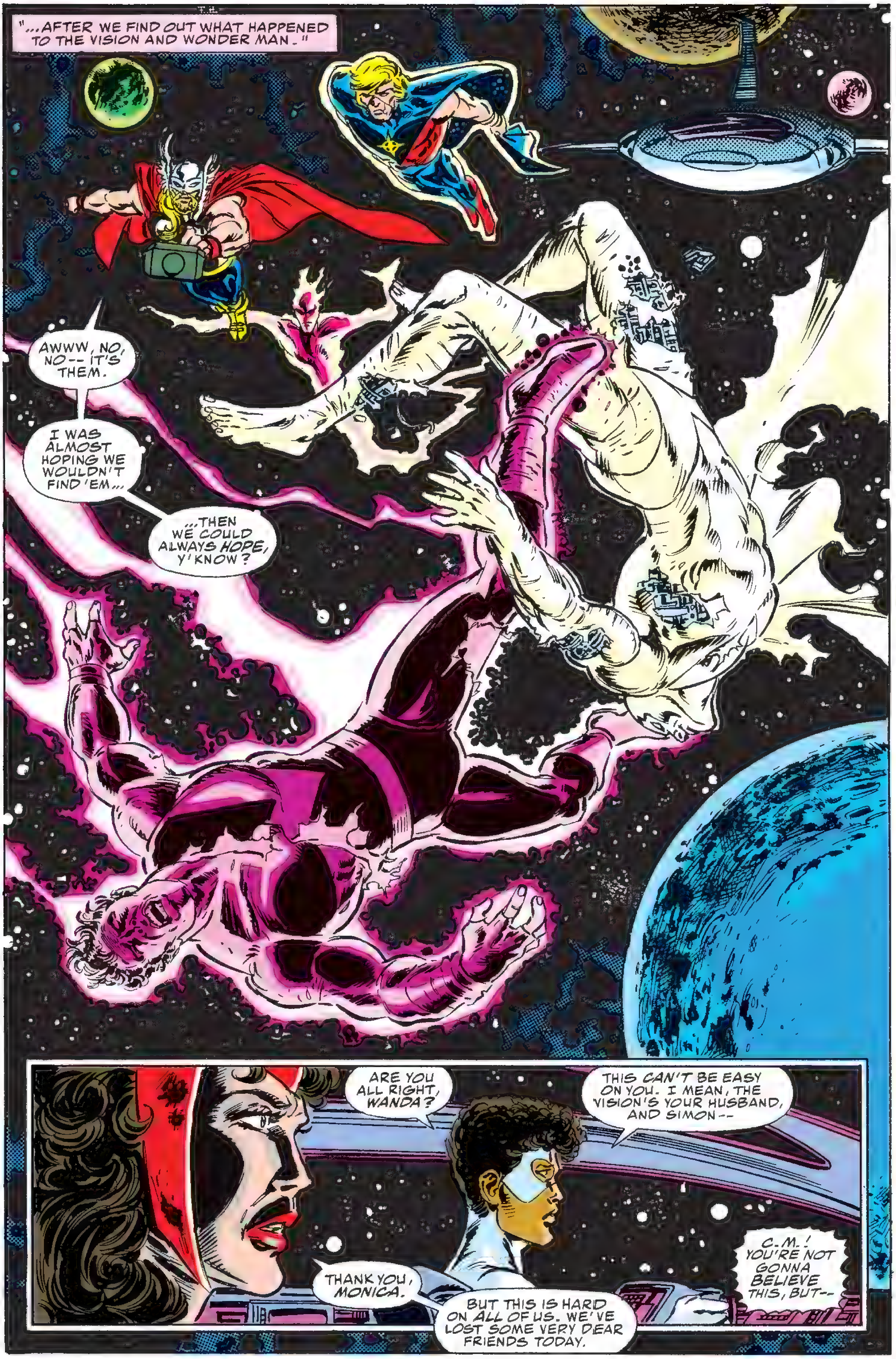

FAR BEYOND THE BORDERLANDS, ON THE OUTER FRINGES OF THE GREATER MAGELLANIC CLOUD...
...LIES A RING OF CLOAKED INTERSTELLAR LISTENING POSTS...
...STEALTH CRAFT SENT FROM THE KREE'S GREAT ENEMY, THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM, TO SPY UPON THE EMPIRE -- A TASK THAT IS RAPIDLY BECOMING OBSOLETE.
<BY SHARRA!
<I NEED TACTICAL--NOW!>
<DATA FROM OUR LONG RANGE PROBES REPORT EXTREME ENERGY FLUCTUATIONS ACROSS THE SPECTRUM, MILORD.
SCANS INDICATE NEGATIVELY-CHARGED ENERGY MATRICES APPEARING THROUGHOUT THE KREE TERRITORIES.>
< RAW GRAVIMETRIC READINGS DETECT NO STELLAR OR PLANETARY DISINTEGRATION AT PRESENT.
IN SHORT, MILORD CAPTAIN, ALL IS WITHIN THE PARAMETERS EXPECTED FROM THE DETONATION OF THE NEGA-BOMB.>
<SO IT IS DONE.>
<COMMUNICATIONS, OPEN AN INSTA-LINK WITH IMPERIAL CENTER...>
<...AND REPORT TO THE MAJESTRIX-SHI'AR LILANDRA...>
<...THE NEWS SHE HAS SO LONG AWAITED...>
<...THE KREE EMPIRE IS NO MORE.>


AND, IN THE AFTERMATH...
...AMONG THE FLOTSAM AND JETSAM OF A DESTROYED CIVILIZATION...
UHHNN...
...MUSTA BEEN SWEPT... A COUPLA MILLION MILES... ONLY MY QUANTUM FORCE FIELD SAVED ME...
CAN'T BELIEVE... THE BOMB WENT OFF... COULDN'T STOP IT... SHOULDA BEEN FASTER...
THE AVENGERS!
WERE THEY CAUGHT... IN IT? GOTTA FIND THEM... MIGHT NEED HELP...
GOTTA... CONCENTRATE... MAYBE GET A FIX ON 'EM...
IT CAN'T BE
IT CAN'T!!
IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, HE IS SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND MILES AWAY...
...AND FOR THE SECOND TIME TODAY, QUASAR FEELS HIS HEART BREAK.
NO!!

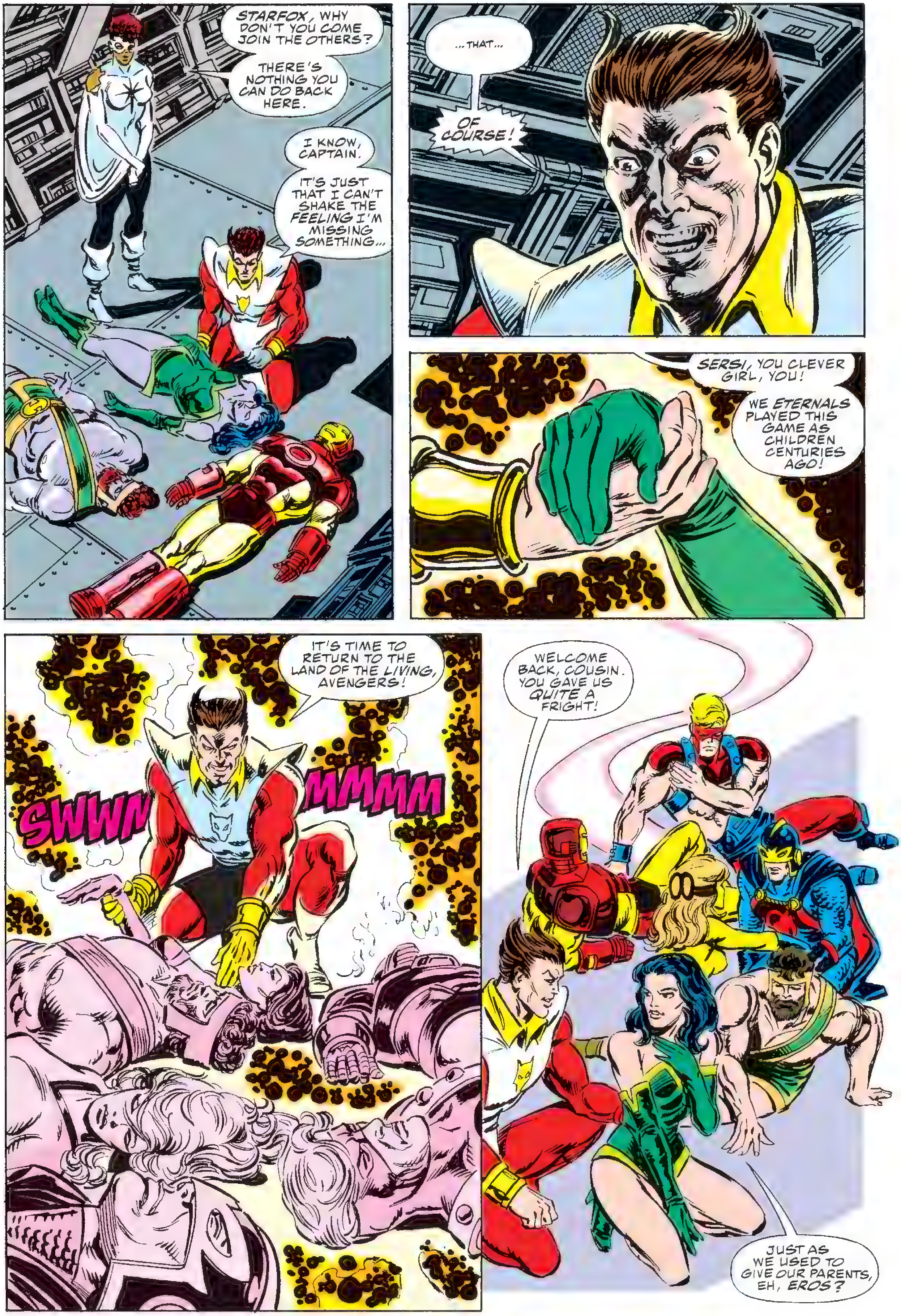

THERE IS ONLY A MOURNFUL WIND ON HALA NOW...
...A CONSTANT WIND BLOWING THROUGH THE RUINS, THAT NEARLY DROWNS OUT THE MURMURING OF A WANDERING LOST SOUL...
...THE MADWOMAN CALLED DEATHBIRD.
O WRETCHED LILANDRA, MY SWEET, GENTLE SISTER... DID YOU IN TRUTH ORDER THIS?
HOW BLOODTHIRSTY YOU'VE BECOME, SISTER. HOW LIKE ME, YOUR HATED RIVAL.
BUT YOU FEARED THE NEGA-BOMB. YOU FEARED IT WOULD COST YOU YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL! AND STILL YOU USED IT...!
DID YOU FIND IN YOUR HEART THAT COLD HARD PLACE ALL LEADERS MUST HAVE, SISTER? HOW I WISH I HAD WITNESSED THAT!
BUT, NO-- I WALK ALONE AMONG AN EMPIRE OF CORPSES AND YET I STILL LIVE!
IS IT PUNISHMENT, PERHAPS? FOR THIS CRIME IS SHI'AR... AND MY SINS ARE LEGION.
O, AERIE, WE HAVE BROUGHT THE KREE LOW, INDEED...
...BUT NEED WE HAVE KILLED THEM ALL?
HERE IN THEIR SHATTERED CITADEL, I SHALL BEG FORGIVENESS...
LILANDRA, HOW LIKE YOU I NOW BECOME...
...FOR I SUDDENLY FIND MYSELF FEARING FOR MY SOUL.
THE AVENGER, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
EVEN HERE IN THE KREE IMPERIAL CHAMBER THERE IS DEATH!
YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED ON EARTH, TERRAN, AND LIVED TO AN OLD AGE.
FOR OUR ANCIENT WAR HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU.

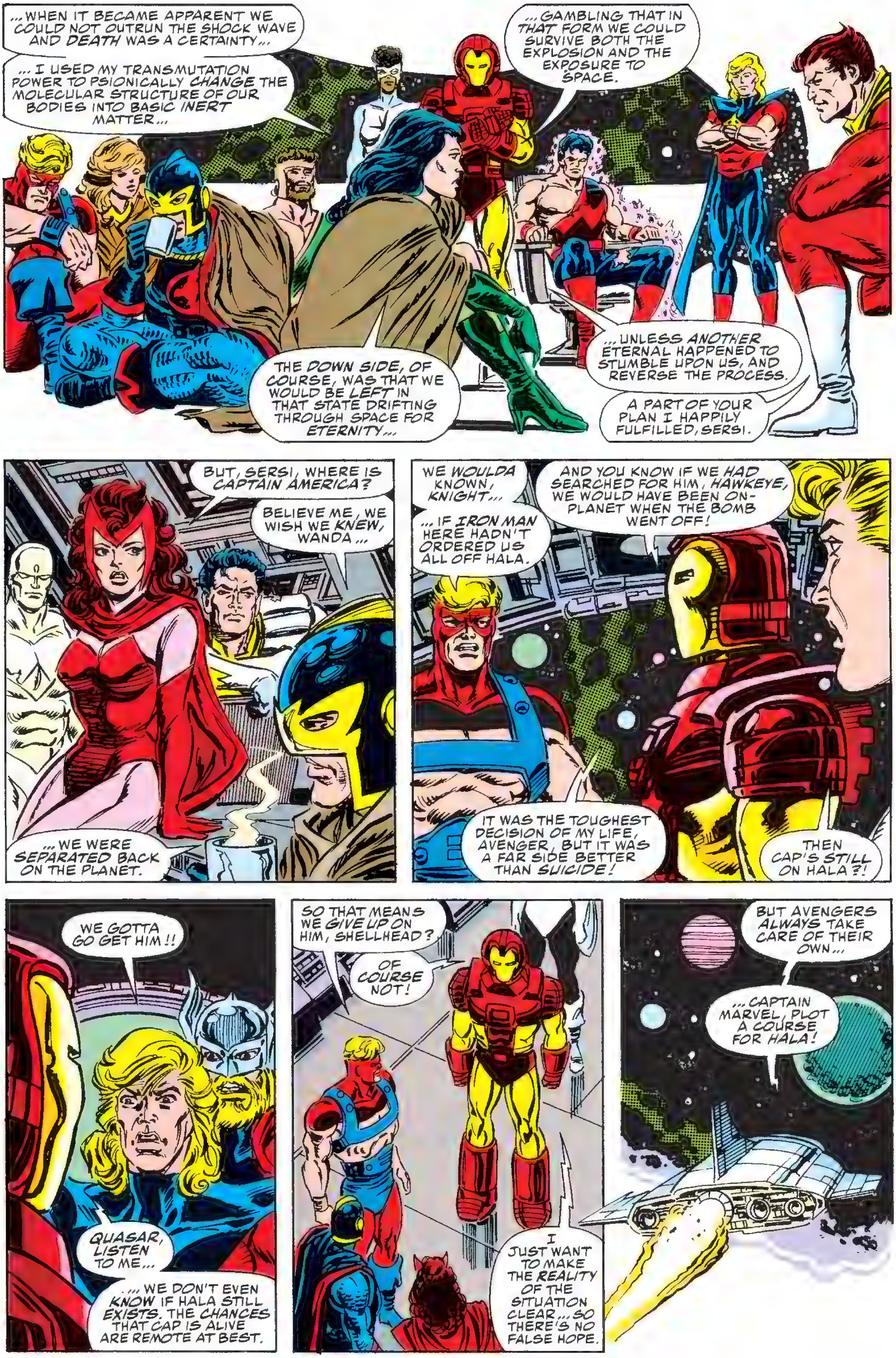

DEEP SPACE...
...WHERE QUASAR BEARS A HEAVY BURDEN...
I FOUND THE QUINJET'S WRECKAGE... NOT THAT THERE WAS MUCH LEFT...
...THE IMPACT MUST HAVE BEEN INCREDIBLE.
THIS SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED! IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS! WE WERE GOING TO STOP THE WAR... NOT DIE IN IT!
OH, MAN -- HOW AM I GOING TO TELL JARVIS--?
AND LUNA! SHE'S JUST A BABY. TO LOSE HER MOTHER NOW--
HEY--
HEY--
HEY!
WHA--?!
WENDELL!
MAN, ARE YOU A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES, BUDDY!
THOR--LEGGO! LET GO!
HEY--SORRY.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, THOR.
THE OTHERS--THE AVENGERS WHO WENT TO HALA--THEY WERE CAUGHT IN THE NEGABOMB EXPLOSION--
--THEY WERE KILLED, THOR!
DON'T YOU SEE? THEY'RE DEAD! DEAD!


NO.
ALL OF THEM? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
BELIEVE IT.
I-I COULDN'T FIND CAP.
HE MUST STILL BE OUT THERE... ALONE.
BUT... YOU GUYS PULLED THROUGH OKAY?
WE'RE BATTERED AND BRUISED, QUASAR, BUT WE RODE OUT THE BLAST WAVE WITH MINIMAL DAMAGE.
CAPTAIN MARVEL!
THEN AT LEAST THE SHI'AR ENVOY MADE IT.
I ONLY *WISH* THAT WERE TRUE, WENDELL.
BUT *WONDER MAN* AND THE *VISION* WERE *TRAPPED* ON THE NEGA-BOMB WHEN IT DETONATED...
...WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO THE BLAST'S *EPICENTER* WHEN WE PICKED UP YOUR ID BEACON. BELIEVE ME, IT WAS LIKE MUSIC TO OUR EARS.
I JUST WISH CAP AND THE OTHERS COULD HAVE BEEN AS LUCKY.
BRING OUR FRIENDS ABOARD, QUASAR.
WE'LL BRING THEM HOME...

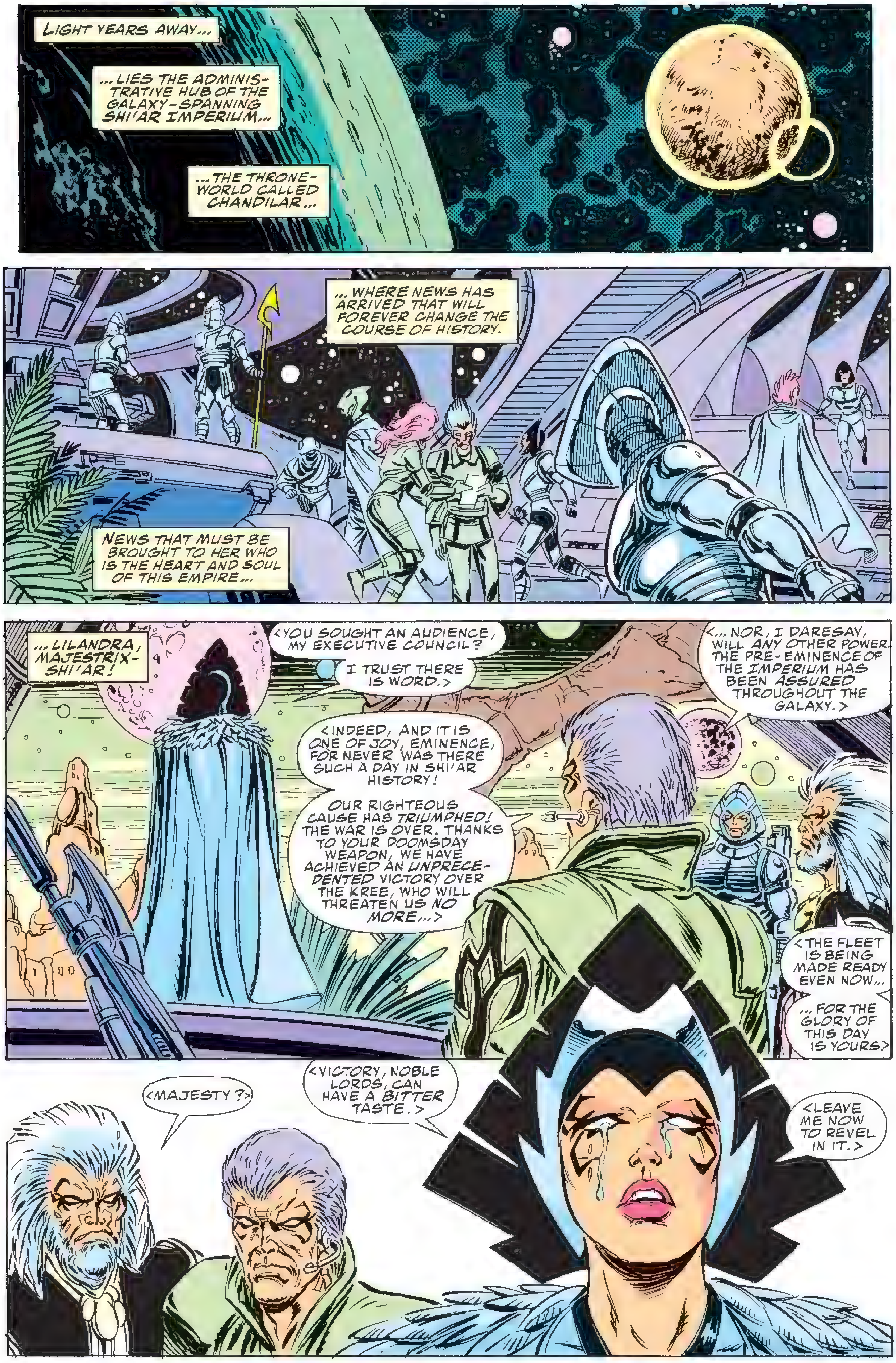

"...AFTER WE FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE VISION AND WONDER MAN."
AWWW, NO, NO-- IT'S THEM.
I WAS ALMOST HOPING WE WOULDN'T FIND 'EM...
...THEN WE COULD ALWAYS *HOPE*, Y'KNOW?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, *WANDA*?
THIS *CAN'T* BE EASY ON YOU. I MEAN, THE VISION'S YOUR HUSBAND, AND SIMON--
THANK YOU, *MONICA*.
BUT THIS IS HARD ON *ALL* OF US. WE'VE LOST SOME VERY DEAR FRIENDS TODAY.
C.M.! YOU'RE NOT GONNA *BELIEVE* THIS, BUT--

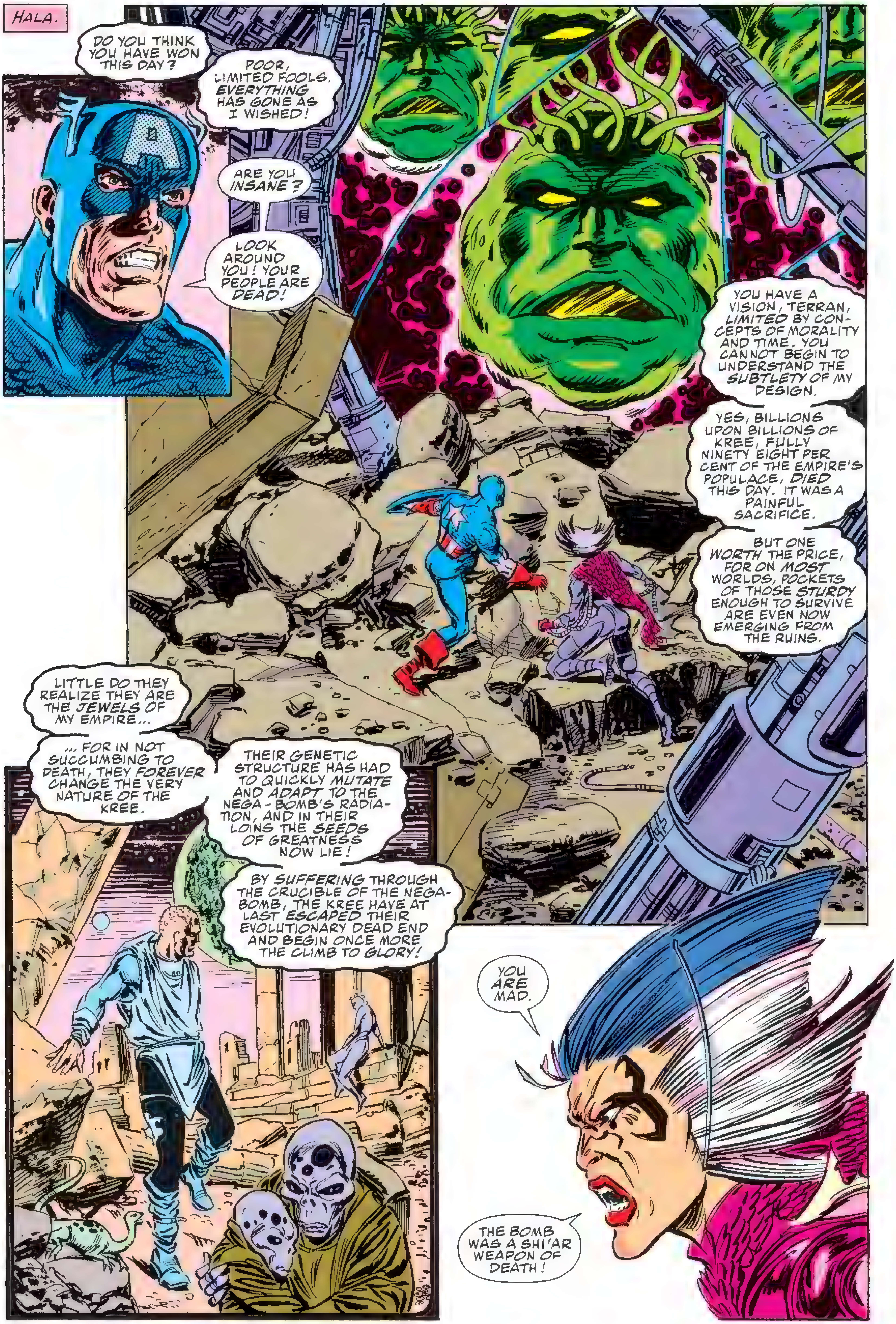
--THEY'RE ALIVE!
THEY'RE BOTH ALIVE!
THANK HEAVEN! BUT HOW--
--OH, WHO CARES?! THIS IS INCREDIBLE!
YOU KNOW IT, LADY!
FINALLY SOMETHING'S GONE RIGHT TODAY!
VISION... SIMON...
...I COULDN'T DARE HOPE. I JUST THANK GOD YOU'RE BOTH ALL RIGHT!
OUR SURVIVAL HAD MORE TO DO WITH THE DETONATION'S DIRECTIONAL FORCE THAN ANY DIVINE INTERVENTION, WANDA.
THE CONCUSSIVE BLAST RADIATED OUT FROM THE NEGA-BOMB, LEAVING A VACCUUM AT ITS CENTER.
WE FOUND OURSELVES IN A SITUATION NOT UNLIKE THAT OF HIROSHIMA'S PEACE BUILDING WHICH SURVIVED INTACT DESPITE BEING AT THE VERY HEART OF THE FIRST ATOMIC BOMB EXPLOSION.
WHOA, VIZH... SOME TIME FOR HISTORY LESSONS, HUH? TAKIN' NOTES, WANDA...?
HEY! WE'RE ALIVE, MAN... OH, MAN... WE MADE IT THROUGH THE LIGHT.
BUT YOU GOT YOUR WISH, BRO... GENOCIDE... SWEET GENOCIDE... BUT MA EARTH'S SAFE.
YES, INDEED... WHO CARES 'BOUT THE KREE, ANYWAY?
THAT ENERGY FLARE...!
VISION, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO SIMON?
HE IS OBVIOUSLY DISORIENTED.
I WOULD HYPOTHESIZE THAT HIS BODY'S IONIC MOLECULAR STRUCTURE IS ATTEMPTING TO ABSORB THE SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF NEGA-RADIATION IT WAS EXPOSED TO.
I SHOULD ADD THAT A MUTAGENETIC RESPONSE TO THIS ASSIMILATION IS STATISTICALLY POSSIBLE.
HEY, I'M STARVING!
ANYONE GOT A PASTRAMI SANDWICH?

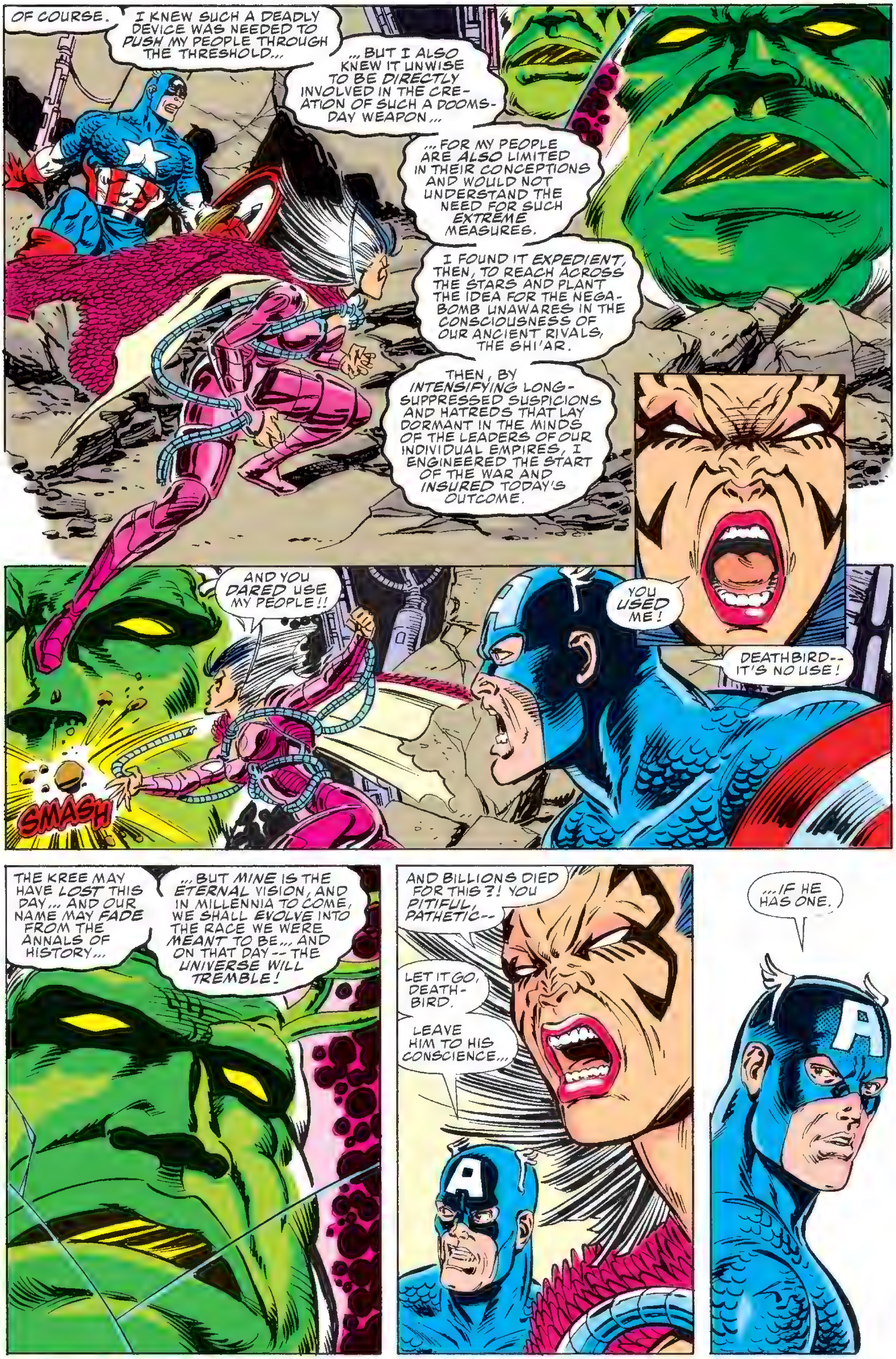

STARFOX, WHY DON'T YOU COME JOIN THE OTHERS?
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO BACK HERE.
I KNOW, CAPTAIN.
IT'S JUST THAT I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING I'M MISSING SOMETHING...
...THAT...
OF COURSE!
SERSI, YOU CLEVER GIRL, YOU!
WE ETERNALS PLAYED THIS GAME AS CHILDREN CENTURIES AGO!
IT'S TIME TO RETURN TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING, AVENGERS!
SWWMMMM
WELCOME BACK, COUSIN. YOU GAVE US QUITE A FRIGHT!
JUST AS WE USED TO GIVE OUR PARENTS, EH, EROS?

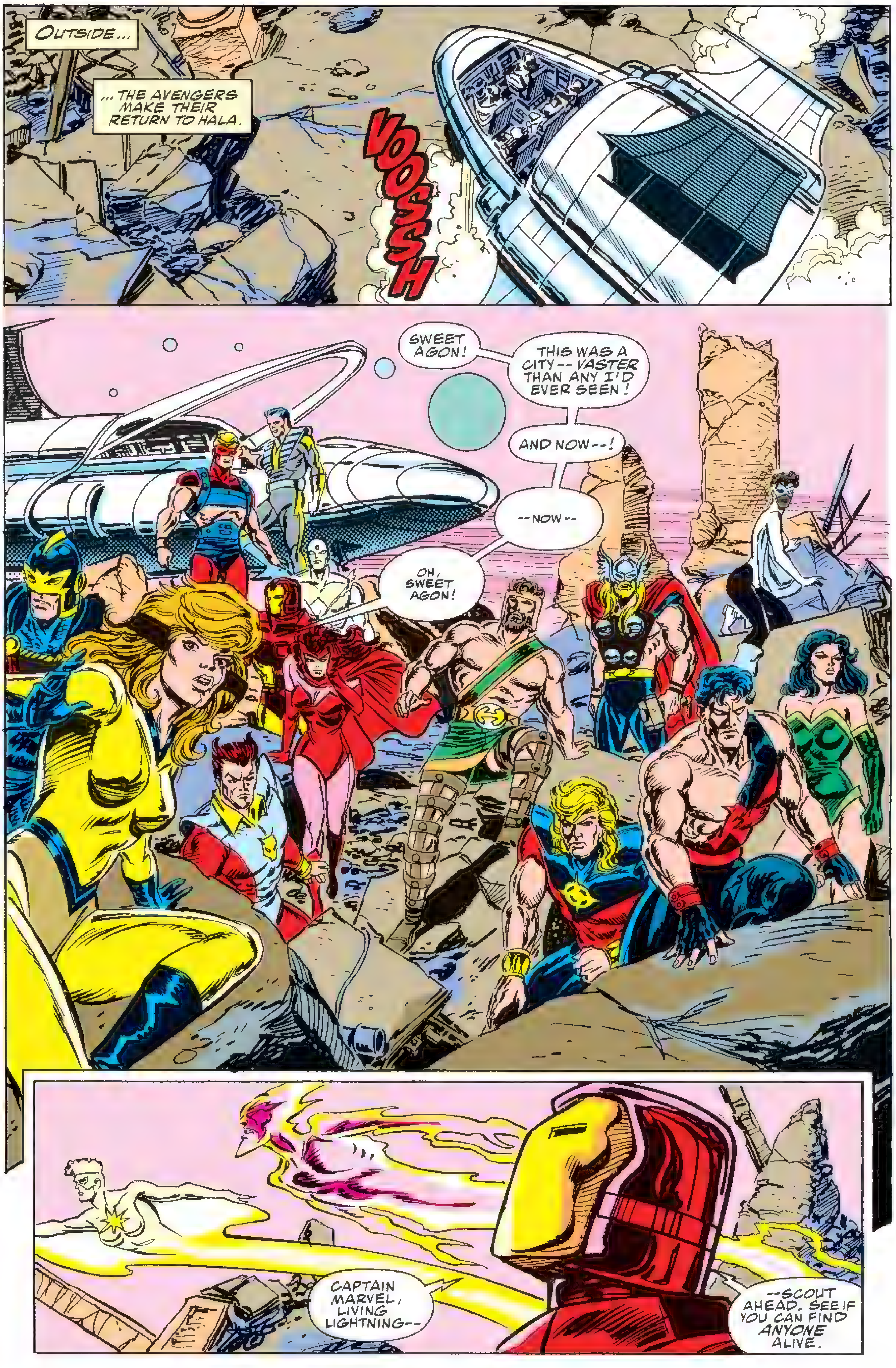

...WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT WE COULD NOT OUTRUN THE SHOCK WAVE AND *DEATH* WAS A CERTAINTY...
...I USED MY TRANSMUTATION POWER TO PSIONICALLY *CHANGE* THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF OUR BODIES INTO BASIC *INERT* MATTER...
...GAMBLING THAT IN *THAT* FORM WE COULD SURVIVE BOTH THE EXPLOSION AND THE EXPOSURE TO SPACE.
THE *DOWN SIDE*, OF COURSE, WAS THAT WE WOULD BE *LEFT* IN THAT STATE DRIFTING THROUGH SPACE FOR *ETERNITY*...
...UNLESS *ANOTHER* ETERNAL HAPPENED TO STUMBLE UPON US, AND REVERSE THE PROCESS.
A PART OF YOUR PLAN I HAPPILY FULFILLED, SERSI.
BUT, SERSI, WHERE IS *CAPTAIN AMERICA*?
BELIEVE ME, WE WISH WE *KNEW*, WANDA...
...WE WERE *SEPARATED* BACK ON THE PLANET.
WE *WOULDA* KNOWN, *KNIGHT*...
...IF *IRON MAN* HERE HADN'T ORDERED US ALL OFF HALA.
AND YOU KNOW IF WE *HAD* SEARCHED FOR HIM, *HAWKEYE*, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN ON-PLANET WHEN THE BOMB WENT OFF!
IT WAS THE TOUGHEST DECISION OF MY LIFE, AVENGER, BUT IT WAS A FAR SIDE BETTER THAN *SUICIDE*!
THEN CAP'S *STILL* ON HALA?!
WE GOTTA GO GET HIM!!
QUASAR, *LISTEN* TO ME...
...WE DON'T EVEN *KNOW* IF HALA STILL *EXISTS*. THE *CHANCES* THAT CAP IS ALIVE ARE REMOTE AT BEST.
SO THAT MEANS WE *GIVE UP* ON HIM, SHELLHEAD?
OF COURSE NOT!
I JUST WANT TO MAKE THE *REALITY* OF THE SITUATION CLEAR... SO THERE'S NO FALSE HOPE.
BUT AVENGERS *ALWAYS* TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN...
...CAPTAIN MARVEL, PLOT A COURSE FOR *HALA*!

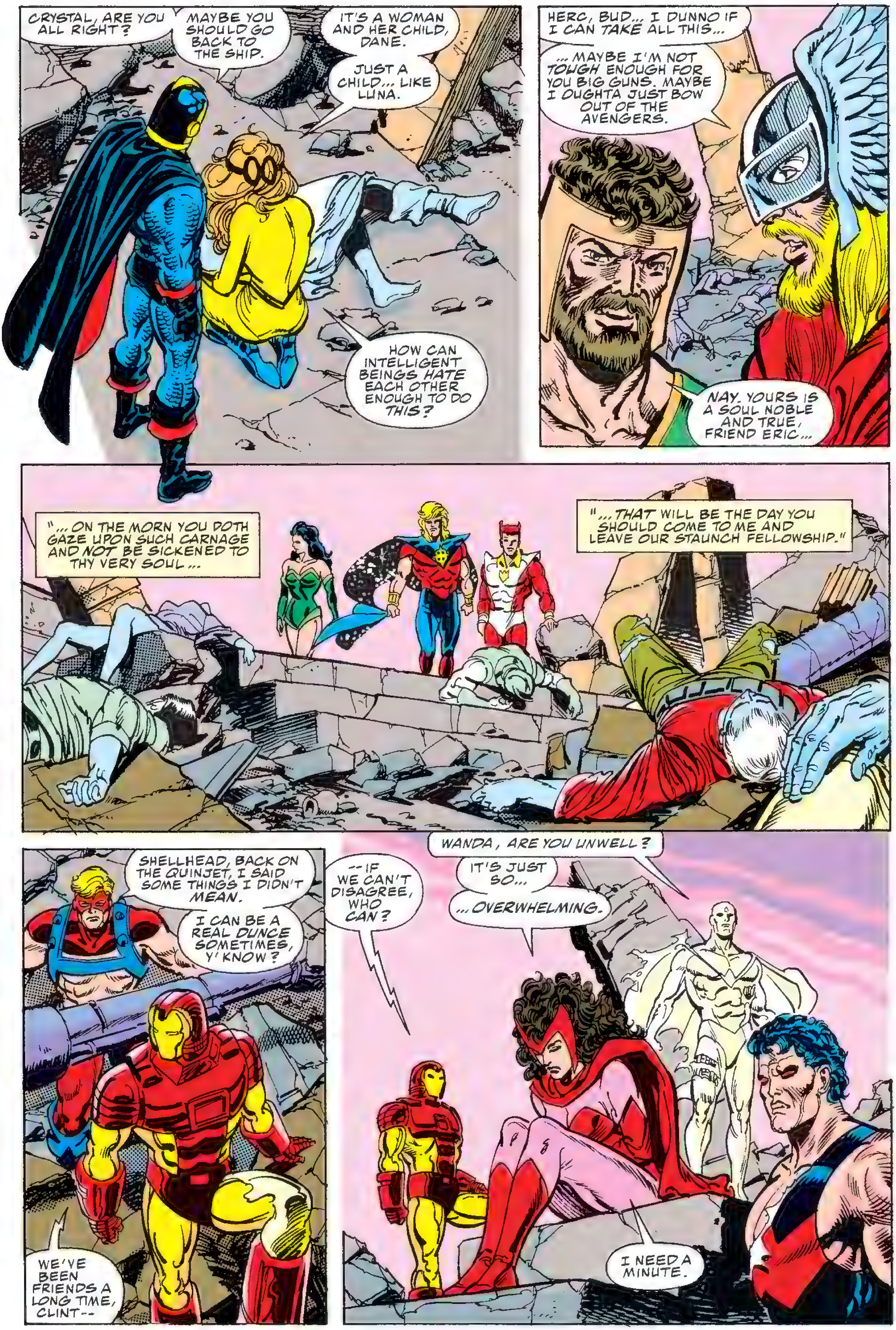
HALA.
YOU *WERE* A NOBLE WARRIOR, TERRAN.
A MAN OF SPIRIT AND METTLE WHO DID BATTLE BRAVELY AGAINST THE KREE AND--
BLOOD AND FIRE--!
YOU STILL *BREATHE!*
DO THE FATES THEN *RELENT* IN THEIR CRUEL JUDGMENT?
AM I *NOT* TO BE LEFT ALONE TO *RULE* A DEAD WORLD?
YOU *ARE* FAIR OF *FACE* AND PLEASING IN *FORM*...
...A FITTING CONSORT, PERHAPS...
...TO ONE WHO WAS *ONCE* MAJESTRIX-SHI'AR...
HUH?
DEATH-BIRD--!
--WHAT'S GOING ON, LADY?!
WHY ASK SUCH A QUESTION OF ONE WHO HAS BEEN AS *MUCH* A *PAWN* IN THIS AFFAIR AS YOU, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT THE LONG *STAGNATION* IS OVER AND THE *DESTINY* OF THE KREE IS NOW *ASSURED!*
THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE?!

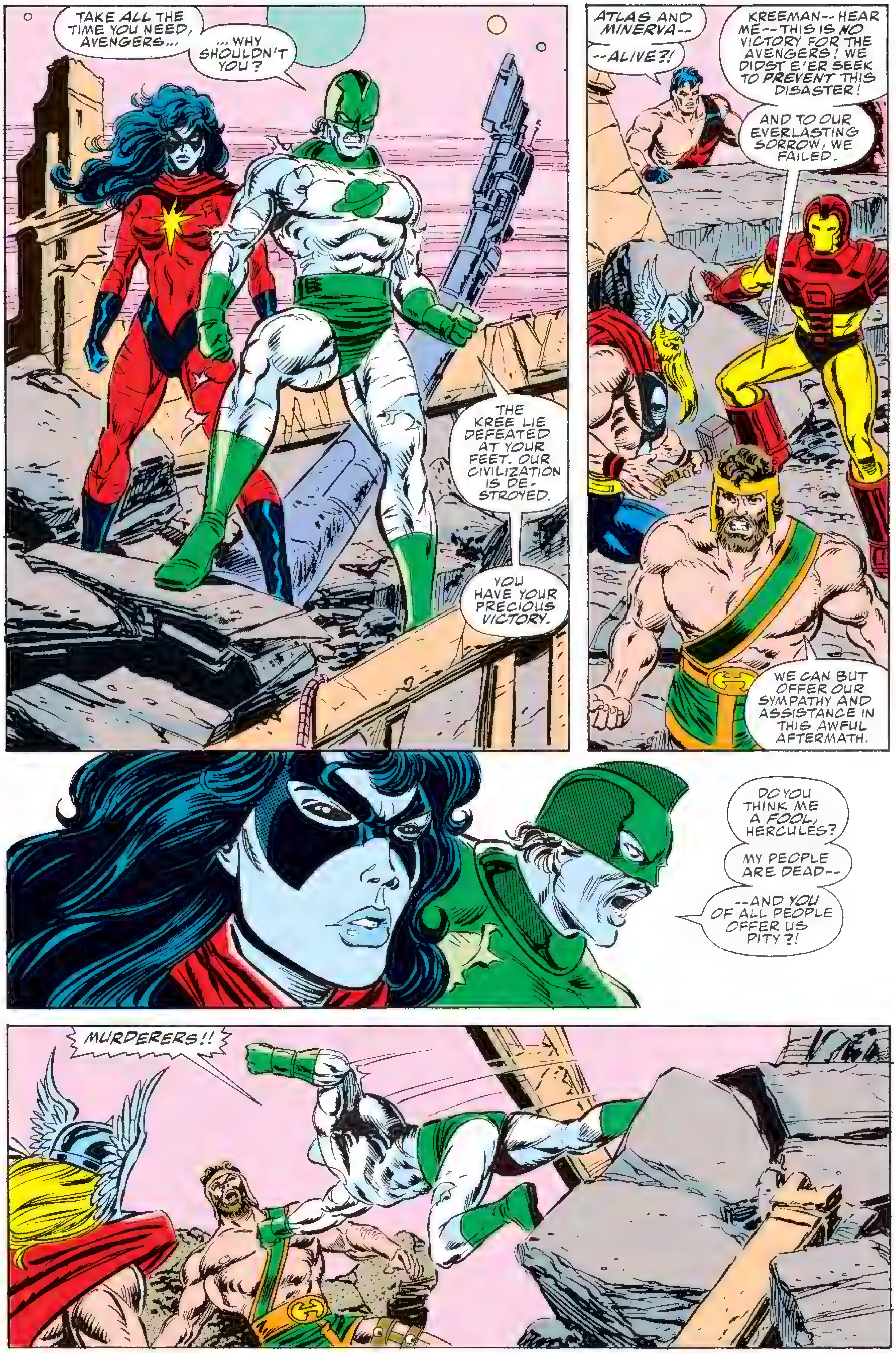

LIGHT YEARS AWAY...
...LIES THE ADMINISTRATIVE HUB OF THE GALAXY-SPANNING SHI'AR IMPERIUM...
...THE THRONE-WORLD CALLED CHANDILAR...
...WHERE NEWS HAS ARRIVED THAT WILL FOREVER CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY.
NEWS THAT MUST BE BROUGHT TO HER WHO IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF THIS EMPIRE...
...LILANDRA, MAJESTRIX-SHI'AR!
<YOU SOUGHT AN AUDIENCE, MY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL?
I TRUST THERE IS WORD.>
<INDEED, AND IT IS ONE OF JOY, EMINENCE, FOR NEVER WAS THERE SUCH A DAY IN SHI'AR HISTORY!
OUR RIGHTEOUS CAUSE HAS TRIUMPHED! THE WAR IS OVER. THANKS TO YOUR DOOMSDAY WEAPON, WE HAVE ACHIEVED AN UNPRECEDENTED VICTORY OVER THE KREE, WHO WILL THREATEN US NO MORE...>
<...NOR, I DARESAY, WILL ANY OTHER POWER. THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE IMPERIUM HAS BEEN ASSURED THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY.>
<THE FLEET IS BEING MADE READY EVEN NOW...
...FOR THE GLORY OF THIS DAY IS YOURS.>
<MAJESTY?>
<VICTORY, NOBLE LORDS, CAN HAVE A BITTER TASTE.>
<LEAVE ME NOW TO REVEL IN IT.>

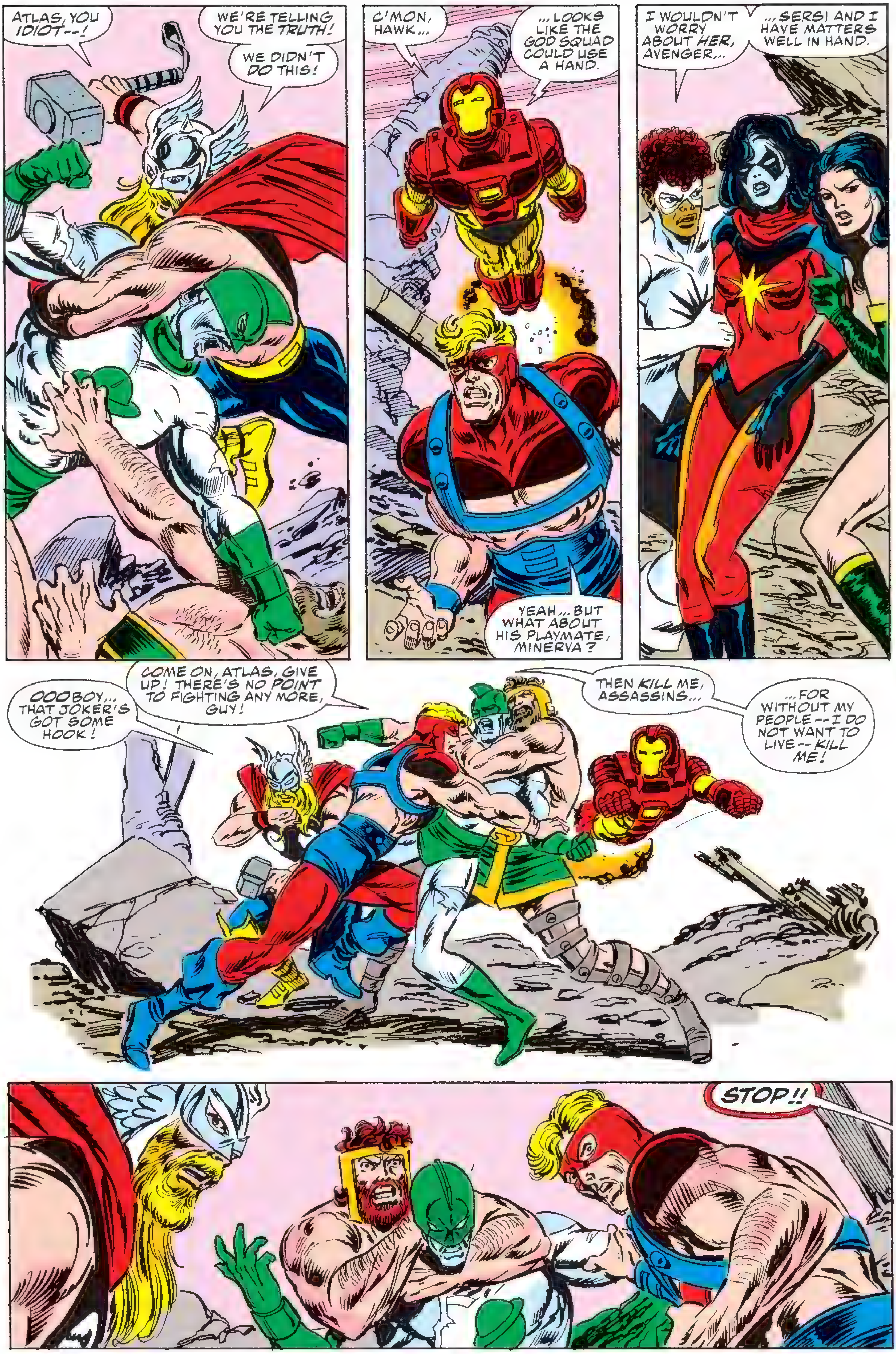

HALA.
DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE WON THIS DAY?
POOR, LIMITED FOOLS. EVERYTHING HAS GONE AS I WISHED!
ARE YOU INSANE?
LOOK AROUND YOU! YOUR PEOPLE ARE DEAD!
YOU HAVE A VISION, TERRAN, LIMITED BY CONCEPTS OF MORALITY AND TIME. YOU CANNOT BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE SUBTLETY OF MY DESIGN.
YES, BILLIONS UPON BILLIONS OF KREE, FULLY NINETY EIGHT PER CENT OF THE EMPIRE'S POPULACE, DIED THIS DAY. IT WAS A PAINFUL SACRIFICE.
BUT ONE WORTH THE PRICE, FOR ON MOST WORLDS, POCKETS OF THOSE STURDY ENOUGH TO SURVIVE ARE EVEN NOW EMERGING FROM THE RUINS.
LITTLE DO THEY REALIZE THEY ARE THE JEWELS OF MY EMPIRE...
...FOR IN NOT SUCCUMBING TO DEATH, THEY FOREVER CHANGE THE VERY NATURE OF THE KREE.
THEIR GENETIC STRUCTURE HAS HAD TO QUICKLY MUTATE AND ADAPT TO THE NEGA-BOMB'S RADIATION, AND IN THEIR LOINS THE SEEDS OF GREATNESS NOW LIE!
BY SUFFERING THROUGH THE CRUCIBLE OF THE NEGA-BOMB, THE KREE HAVE AT LAST ESCAPED THEIR EVOLUTIONARY DEAD END AND BEGIN ONCE MORE THE CLIMB TO GLORY!
YOU ARE MAD.
THE BOMB WAS A SHI'AR WEAPON OF DEATH!

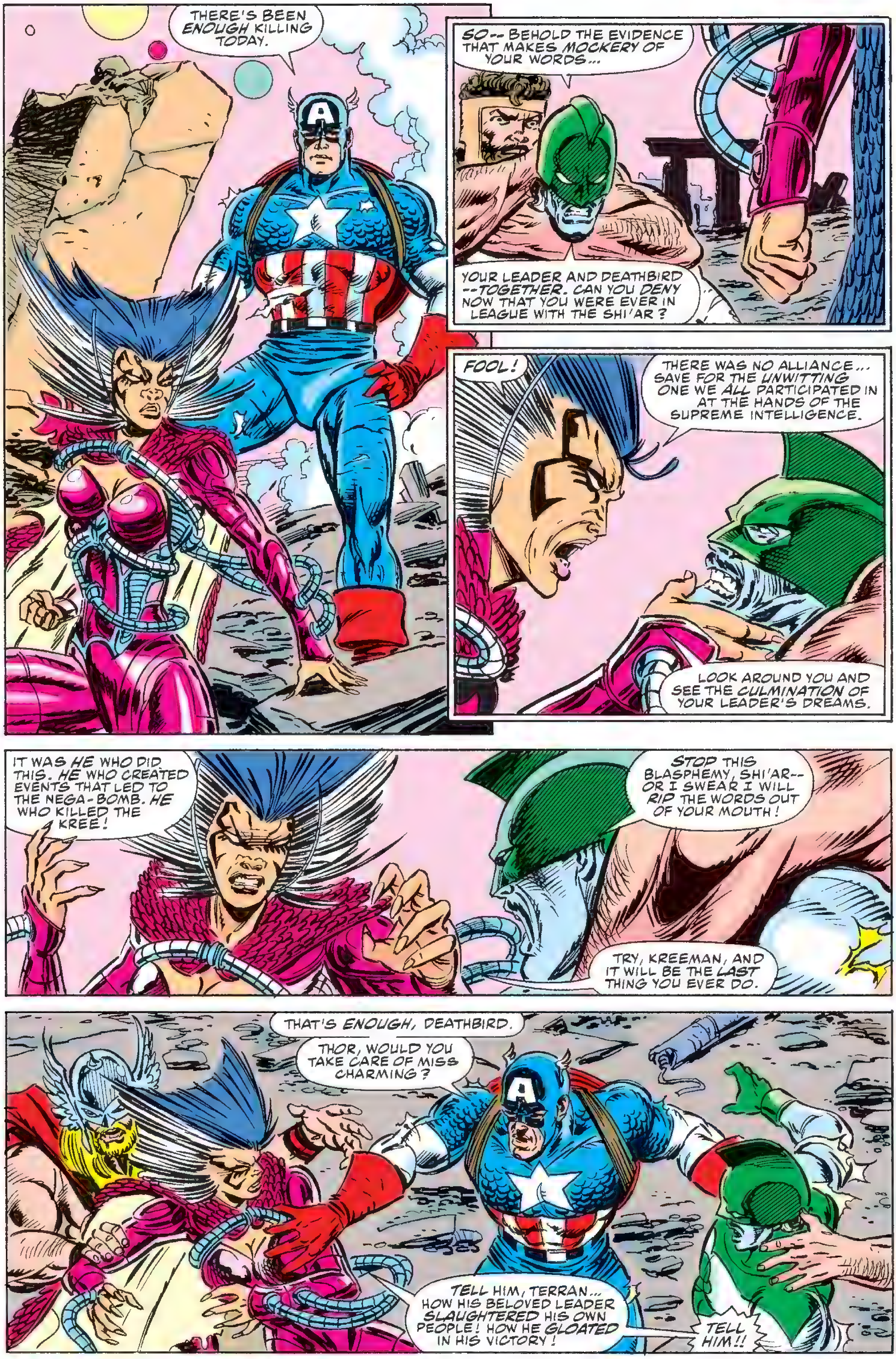

OF COURSE.
I KNEW SUCH A DEADLY DEVICE WAS NEEDED TO *PUSH* MY PEOPLE THROUGH THE THRESHOLD...
...BUT I ALSO KNEW IT UNWISE TO BE *DIRECTLY* INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF SUCH A DOOMSDAY WEAPON...
...FOR MY PEOPLE ARE *ALSO* LIMITED IN THEIR CONCEPTIONS AND WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR SUCH *EXTREME* MEASURES.
I FOUND IT *EXPEDIENT*, THEN, TO REACH ACROSS THE STARS AND PLANT THE IDEA FOR THE NEGA-BOMB UNAWARES IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF OUR ANCIENT RIVALS, THE SHI'AR.
THEN, BY *INTENSIFYING* LONG-SUPPRESSED SUSPICIONS AND HATREDS THAT LAY DORMANT IN THE MINDS OF THE LEADERS OF OUR INDIVIDUAL EMPIRES, I ENGINEERED THE START OF THE WAR AND *INSURED* TODAY'S OUTCOME.
YOU *USED* ME!
AND YOU *DARED* USE MY PEOPLE!!
DEATHBIRD-- IT'S NO USE!
SMASH
THE KREE MAY HAVE *LOST* THIS DAY... AND OUR NAME MAY *FADE* FROM THE ANNALS OF HISTORY...
...BUT *MINE* IS THE *ETERNAL* VISION, AND IN MILLENNIA TO COME, WE SHALL *EVOLVE* INTO THE RACE WE WERE *MEANT* TO BE... AND ON THAT DAY -- THE *UNIVERSE WILL TREMBLE*!
AND BILLIONS DIED FOR THIS ?! YOU *PITIFUL, PATHETIC*--
LET IT GO, DEATHBIRD.
LEAVE HIM TO HIS CONSCIENCE...
...IF HE HAS ONE.

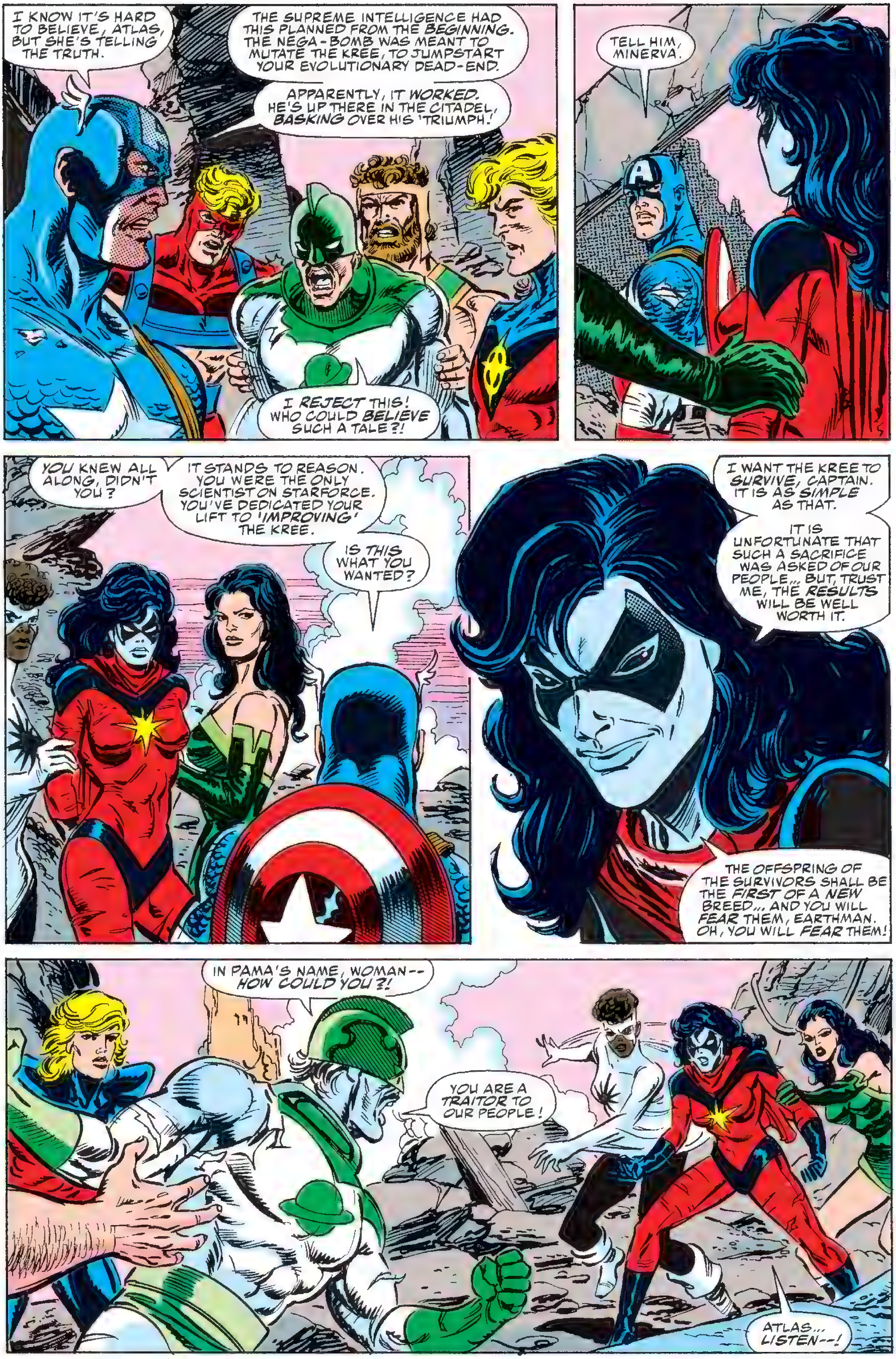

OUTSIDE...
...THE AVENGERS MAKE THEIR RETURN TO HALA.
VOOSSH
SWEET AGON!
THIS WAS A CITY -- VASTER THAN ANY I'D EVER SEEN!
AND NOW--!
--NOW--
OH, SWEET AGON!
CAPTAIN MARVEL, LIVING LIGHTNING--
--SCOUT AHEAD. SEE IF YOU CAN FIND ANYONE ALIVE.


CRYSTAL, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO THE SHIP.
IT'S A WOMAN AND HER CHILD, DANE.
JUST A CHILD... LIKE LUNA.
HOW CAN INTELLIGENT BEINGS *HATE* EACH OTHER ENOUGH TO DO *THIS?*
HERC, BUD... I DUNNO IF I CAN *TAKE* ALL THIS...
...MAYBE I'M NOT *TOUGH* ENOUGH FOR YOU BIG GUNS. MAYBE I OUGHTA JUST BOW OUT OF THE AVENGERS.
NAY. YOURS IS A SOUL NOBLE AND TRUE, FRIEND ERIC...
"...ON THE MORN YOU DOTH GAZE UPON SUCH CARNAGE AND *NOT* BE SICKENED TO THY VERY SOUL...
"...*THAT* WILL BE THE DAY YOU SHOULD COME TO ME AND LEAVE OUR STAUNCH FELLOWSHIP."
SHELLHEAD, BACK ON THE QUINJET, I SAID SOME THINGS I DIDN'T *MEAN.*
I CAN BE A REAL *DUNCE* SOMETIMES, Y'KNOW?
WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS A LONG TIME, CLINT--
--IF WE CAN'T DISAGREE, WHO *CAN?*
WANDA, ARE YOU UNWELL?
IT'S JUST SO...
...OVERWHELMING.
I NEED A MINUTE.

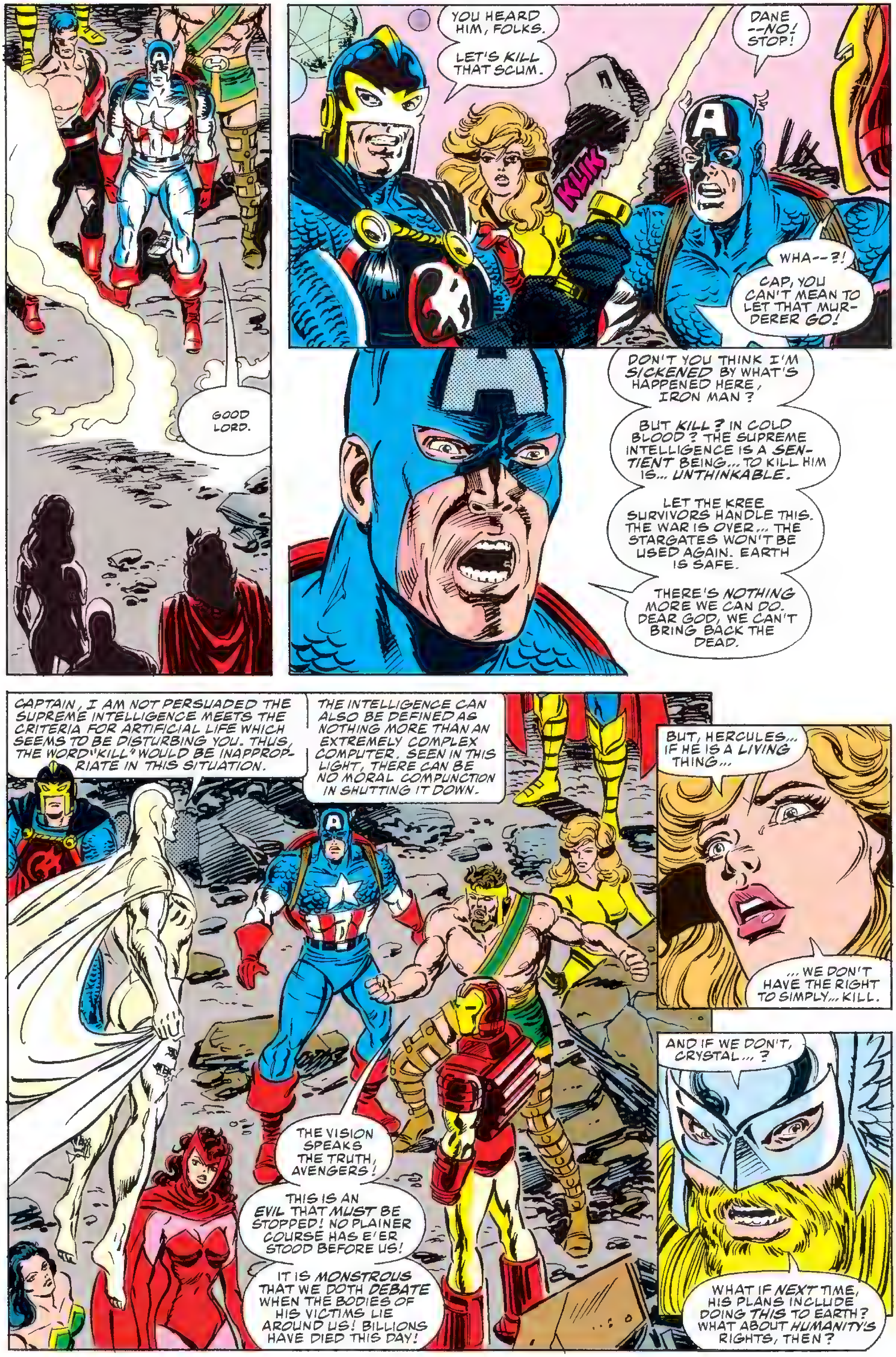

TAKE *ALL* THE TIME YOU NEED, AVENGERS...
...WHY SHOULDN'T YOU?
THE KREE LIE DEFEATED AT YOUR FEET. OUR CIVILIZATION IS DESTROYED.
YOU HAVE YOUR PRECIOUS *VICTORY*.
ATLAS AND MINERVA--
--ALIVE?!
KREEMAN--HEAR ME--THIS IS *NO* VICTORY FOR THE AVENGERS! WE DIDST E'ER SEEK TO *PREVENT* THIS DISASTER!
AND TO OUR EVERLASTING SORROW, WE FAILED.
WE CAN BUT OFFER OUR SYMPATHY AND ASSISTANCE IN THIS AWFUL AFTERMATH.
DO YOU THINK ME A *FOOL*, HERCULES?
MY PEOPLE ARE DEAD--
--AND *YOU* OF ALL PEOPLE OFFER US PITY?!
MURDERERS!!

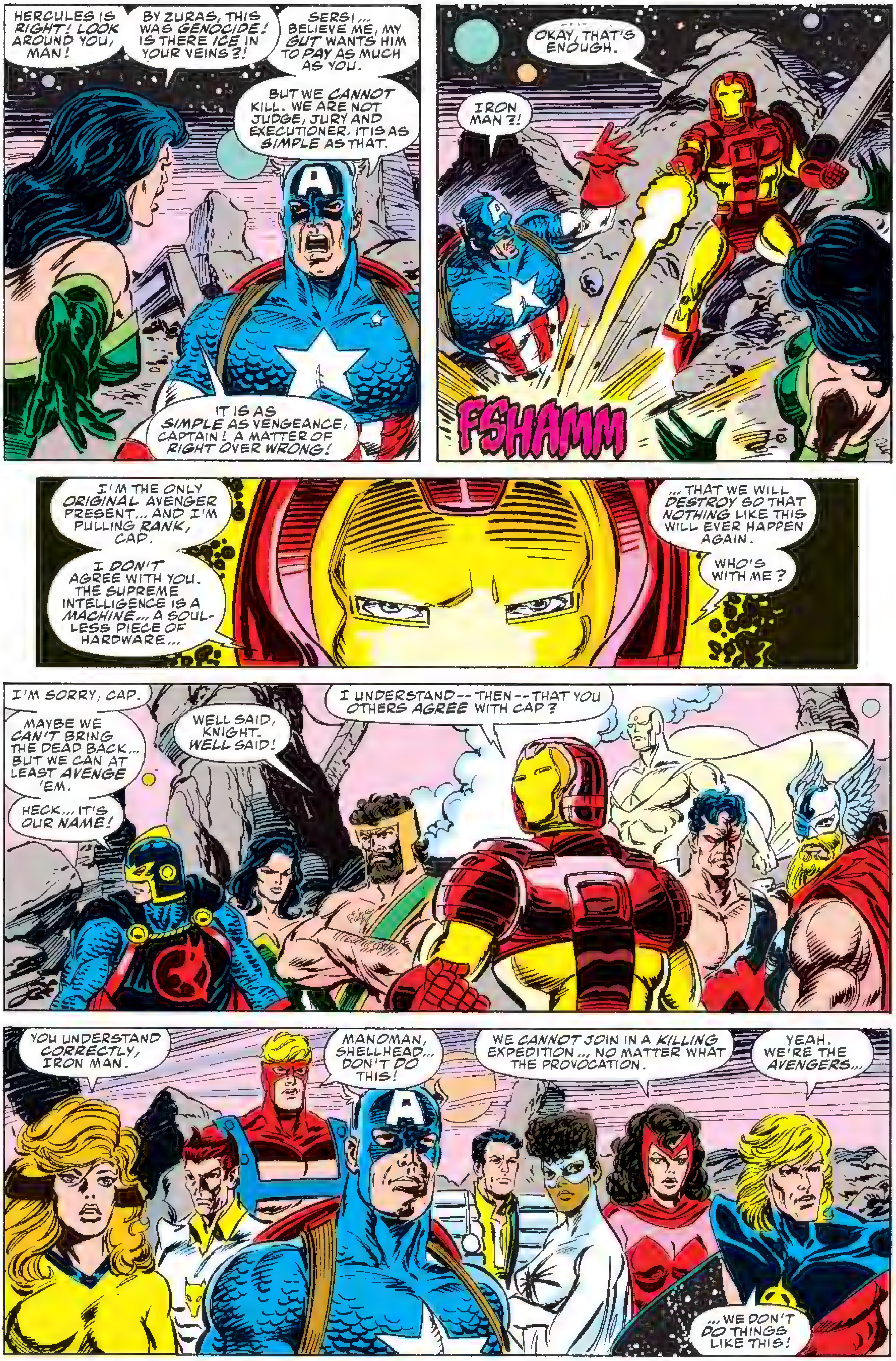

ATLAS, YOU *IDIOT*--!
WE'RE TELLING YOU THE *TRUTH*!
WE DIDN'T *DO* THIS!
C'MON, HAWK...
...LOOKS LIKE THE GOD SQUAD COULD USE A HAND.
YEAH... BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS PLAYMATE, MINERVA?
I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT *HER*, AVENGER...
...SERSI AND I HAVE MATTERS WELL IN HAND.
OOOBOY... THAT JOKER'S GOT SOME HOOK!
COME ON, ATLAS, GIVE UP! THERE'S NO *POINT* TO FIGHTING ANY MORE, GUY!
THEN *KILL* ME, ASSASSINS...
...FOR WITHOUT MY PEOPLE -- I DO NOT WANT TO LIVE -- *KILL* ME!
STOP!!

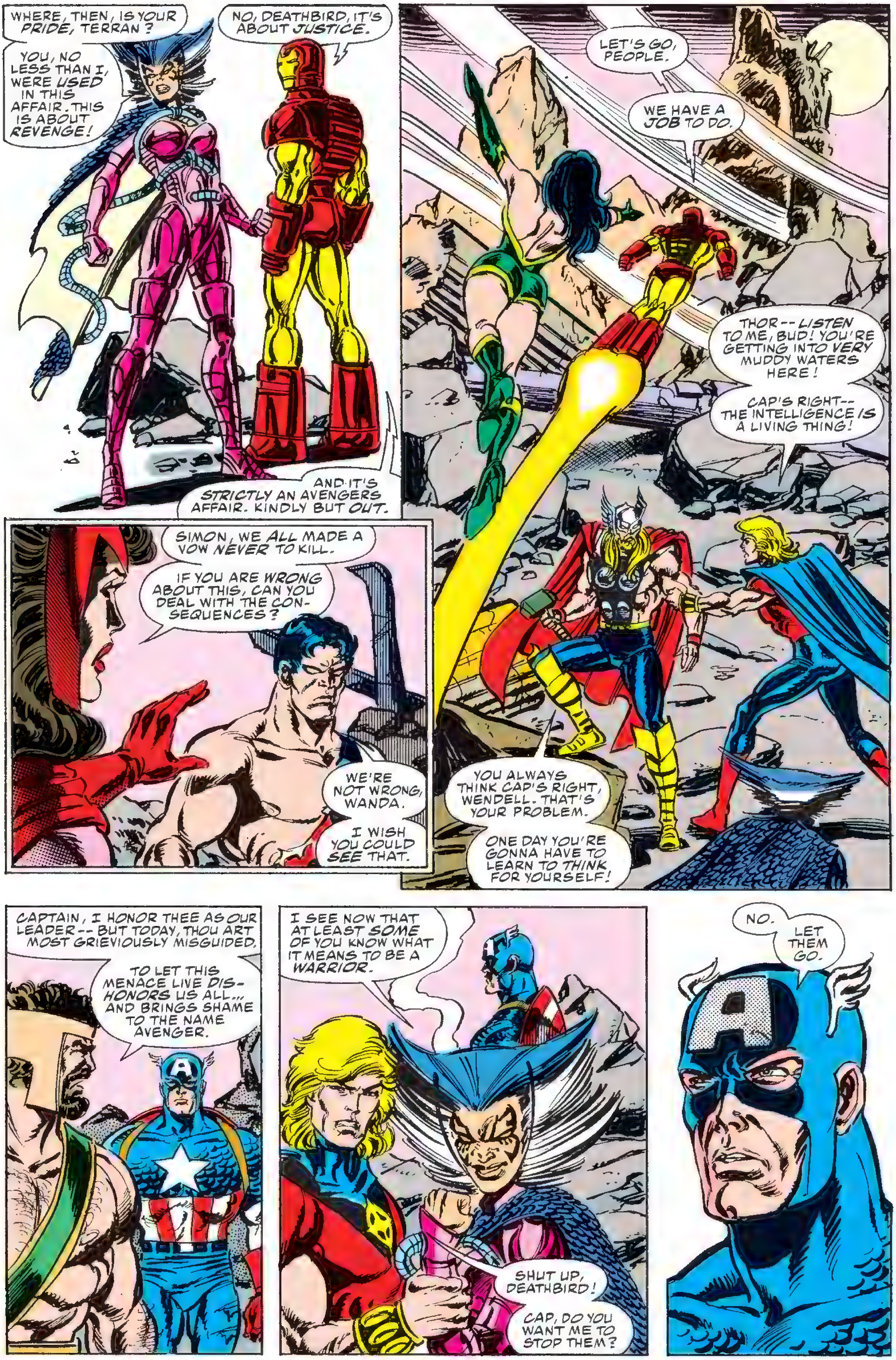

THERE'S BEEN *ENOUGH* KILLING TODAY.
SO-- BEHOLD THE EVIDENCE THAT MAKES *MOCKERY* OF YOUR WORDS...
YOUR LEADER AND DEATHBIRD --*TOGETHER*. CAN YOU *DENY* NOW THAT YOU WERE EVER IN LEAGUE WITH THE SHI'AR?
FOOL!
THERE WAS NO ALLIANCE... SAVE FOR THE *UNWITTING* ONE WE *ALL* PARTICIPATED IN AT THE HANDS OF THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE.
LOOK AROUND YOU AND SEE THE *CULMINATION* OF YOUR LEADER'S DREAMS.
IT WAS *HE* WHO DID THIS. *HE* WHO CREATED EVENTS THAT LED TO THE NEGA-BOMB. *HE* WHO KILLED THE KREE!
STOP THIS BLASPHEMY, SHI'AR-- OR I SWEAR I WILL *RIP* THE WORDS OUT OF YOUR MOUTH!
TRY, KREEMAN, AND IT WILL BE THE *LAST* THING YOU EVER DO.
THAT'S *ENOUGH*, DEATHBIRD.
THOR, WOULD YOU TAKE CARE OF MISS CHARMING?
TELL HIM, TERRAN... HOW HIS BELOVED LEADER *SLAUGHTERED* HIS OWN PEOPLE! HOW HE *GLOATED* IN HIS VICTORY!
TELL HIM!!

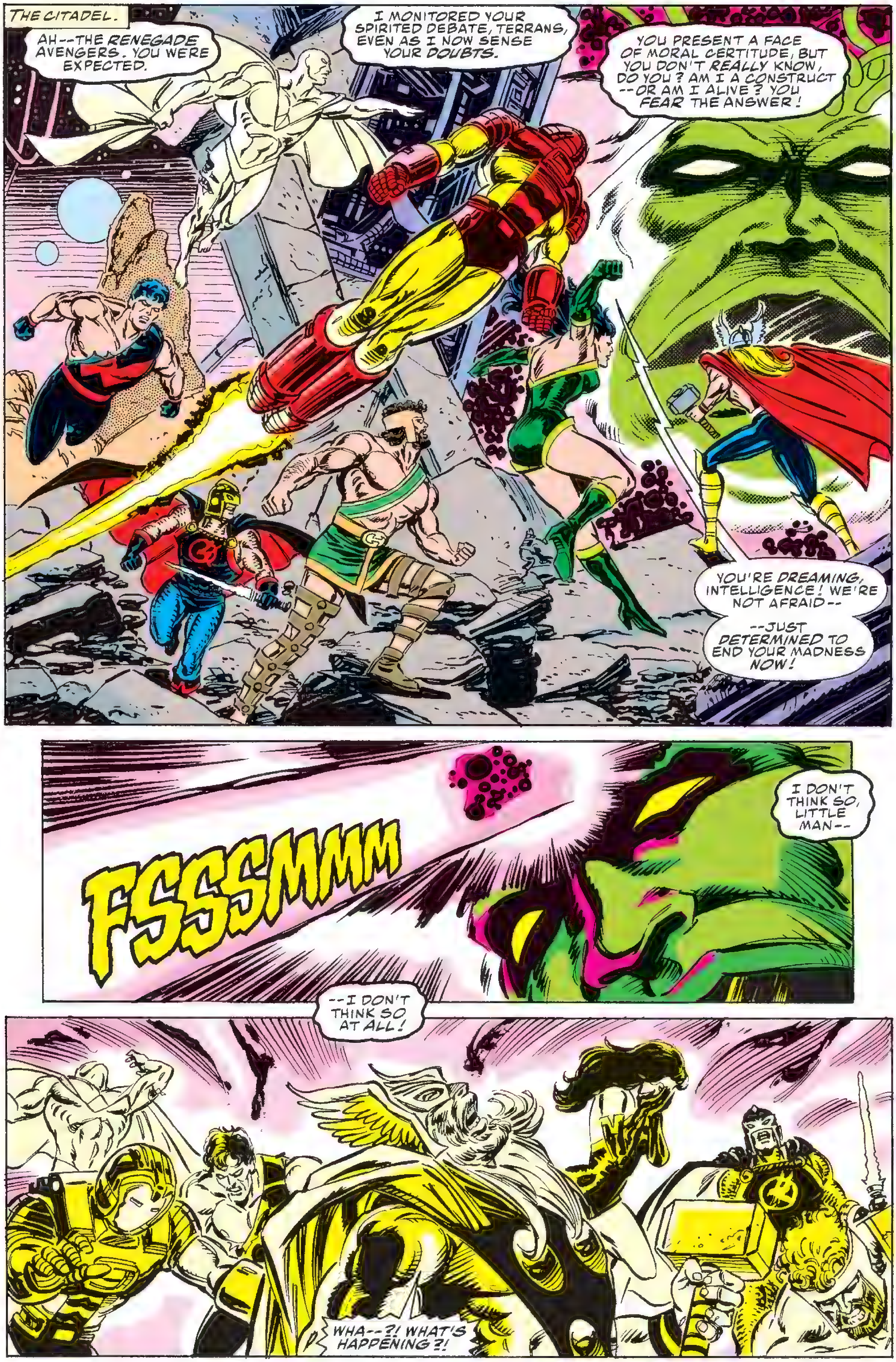

I KNOW IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, ATLAS, BUT SHE'S TELLING THE TRUTH.
THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE HAD THIS PLANNED FROM THE *BEGINNING*. THE NEGA-BOMB WAS MEANT TO MUTATE THE KREE, TO JUMPSTART YOUR EVOLUTIONARY DEAD-END.
APPARENTLY, IT *WORKED*. HE'S UP THERE IN THE CITADEL, *BASKING* OVER HIS 'TRIUMPH.'
I *REJECT* THIS! WHO COULD *BELIEVE* SUCH A TALE?!
TELL HIM, MINERVA.
YOU KNEW ALL ALONG, DIDN'T YOU?
IT STANDS TO REASON. YOU WERE THE ONLY SCIENTIST ON STARFORCE. YOU'VE DEDICATED YOUR LIFT TO *'IMPROVING'* THE KREE.
IS *THIS* WHAT YOU WANTED?
I WANT THE KREE TO *SURVIVE*, CAPTAIN. IT IS AS *SIMPLE* AS THAT.
IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT SUCH A SACRIFICE WAS ASKED OF OUR PEOPLE... BUT, TRUST ME, THE *RESULTS* WILL BE WELL WORTH IT.
THE OFFSPRING OF THE SURVIVORS SHALL BE THE *FIRST* OF A *NEW* BREED... AND YOU WILL *FEAR* THEM, EARTHMAN. OH, YOU WILL *FEAR* THEM!
IN PAMA'S NAME, WOMAN-- *HOW COULD YOU?!*
YOU ARE A *TRAITOR* TO OUR PEOPLE!
ATLAS... *LISTEN--!*

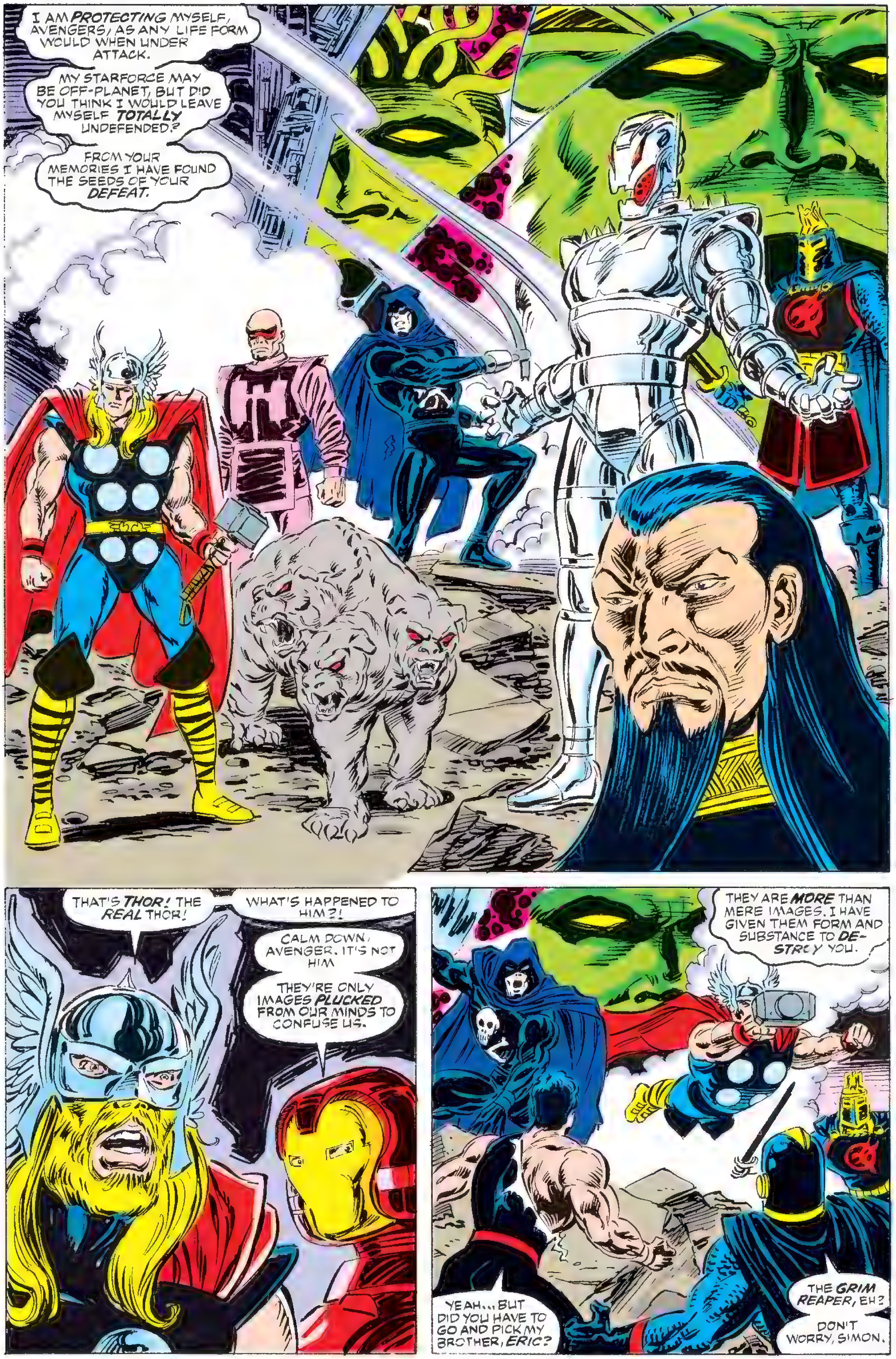
OUR DNA HAS BEEN CHANGED. THE POTENTIAL IS UNLIMITED NOW, AND YOU WERE MEANT TO BE MY MATE...
...THINK OF THE WONDROUS GENERATIONS TO COME! THE GLORY THAT WILL BE THEIRS! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? THE WEAK HAD TO DIE!
NO, THEY DID NOT.
BUT WE SHALL JOIN THEM.
TEK
CAPTAIN AMERICA, I SUGGEST YOU AND THE AVENGERS SEEK COVER.
I HAVE ENGAGED MY BATTLE-SUIT'S SELF-DESTRUCT PROGRAM. THE BLAST SHALL BE QUITE... VIOLENT.
GOOD LORD, ATLAS-- DON'T DO THIS!
I MUST, CAPTAIN.
I SEE NOW THAT MY LIFE HAS BEEN A LIE. I HAVE SERVED A MONSTER WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL...
...AND IN DOING SO I AM AS CULPABLE AS HE FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE.
I SALUTE YOU, AVENGERS. YOU ARE INDEED WORTHY OF RESPECT.
I BEG YOU... DO WHAT I CANNOT... MAKE THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE PAY FOR HIS CRIME.
DESTROY HIM SO HIS VICTIMS MAY REST IN PEACE.
ATT-LASS!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTANNND
VMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM

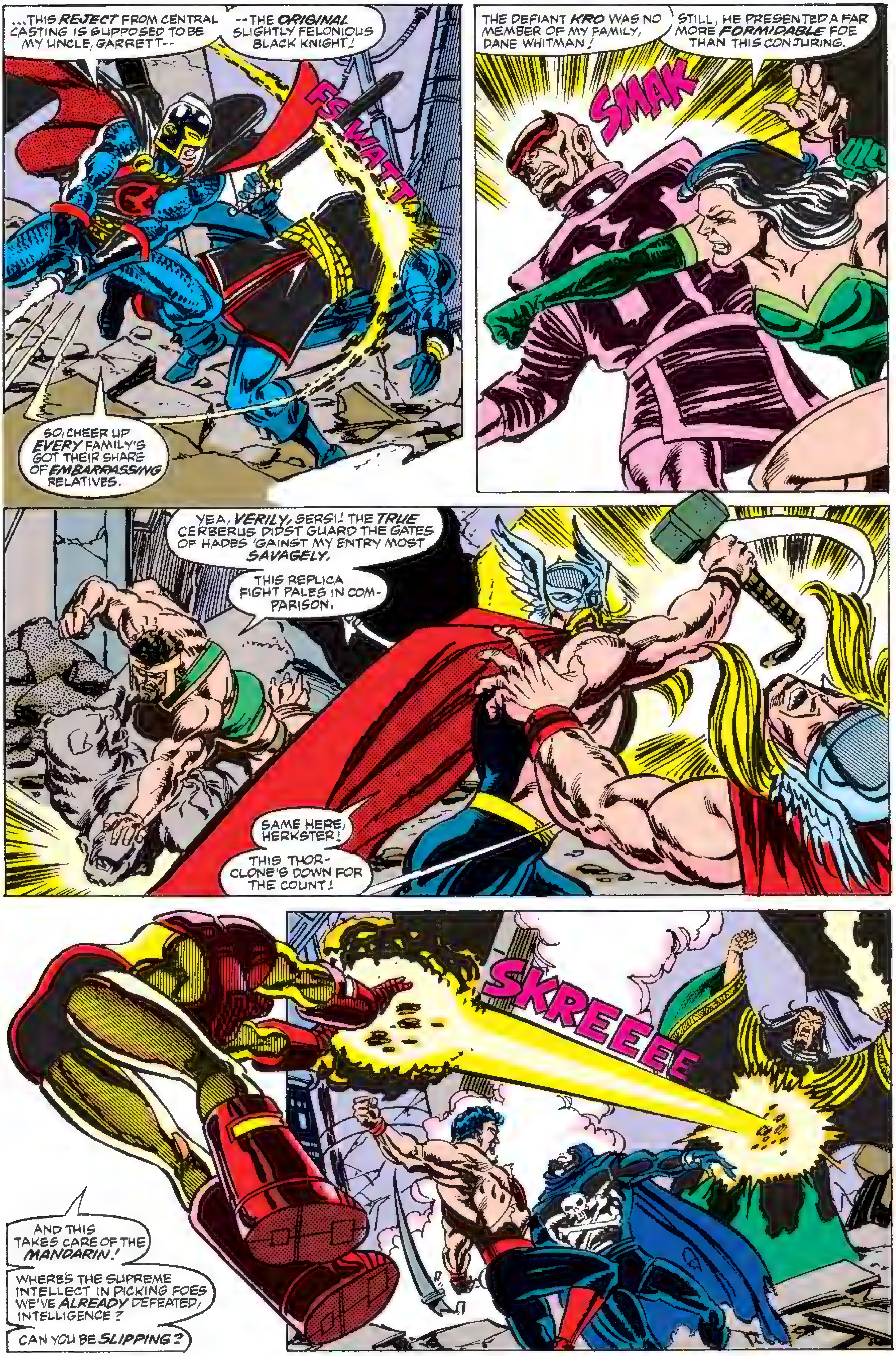

GOOD LORD.
YOU HEARD HIM, FOLKS.
LET'S KILL THAT SCUM.
KLIK
DANE --NO! STOP!
WHA--?!
CAP, YOU CAN'T MEAN TO LET THAT MURDERER GO!
DON'T YOU THINK I'M SICKENED BY WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE, IRON MAN?
BUT KILL? IN COLD BLOOD? THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE IS A SENTIENT BEING... TO KILL HIM IS... UNTHINKABLE.
LET THE KREE SURVIVORS HANDLE THIS. THE WAR IS OVER... THE STARGATES WON'T BE USED AGAIN. EARTH IS SAFE.
THERE'S NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO. DEAR GOD, WE CAN'T BRING BACK THE DEAD.
CAPTAIN, I AM NOT PERSUADED THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR ARTIFICIAL LIFE WHICH SEEMS TO BE DISTURBING YOU. THUS, THE WORD "KILL" WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE IN THIS SITUATION.
THE INTELLIGENCE CAN ALSO BE DEFINED AS NOTHING MORE THAN AN EXTREMELY COMPLEX COMPUTER. SEEN IN THIS LIGHT, THERE CAN BE NO MORAL COMPUNCTION IN SHUTTING IT DOWN.
THE VISION SPEAKS THE TRUTH, AVENGERS!
THIS IS AN EVIL THAT MUST BE STOPPED! NO PLAINER COURSE HAS E'ER STOOD BEFORE US!
IT IS MONSTROUS THAT WE DOTH DEBATE WHEN THE BODIES OF HIS VICTIMS LIE AROUND US! BILLIONS HAVE DIED THIS DAY!
BUT, HERCULES... IF HE IS A LIVING THING...
... WE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO SIMPLY... KILL.
AND IF WE DON'T, CRYSTAL...?
WHAT IF NEXT TIME, HIS PLANS INCLUDE DOING THIS TO EARTH? WHAT ABOUT HUMANITY'S RIGHTS, THEN?

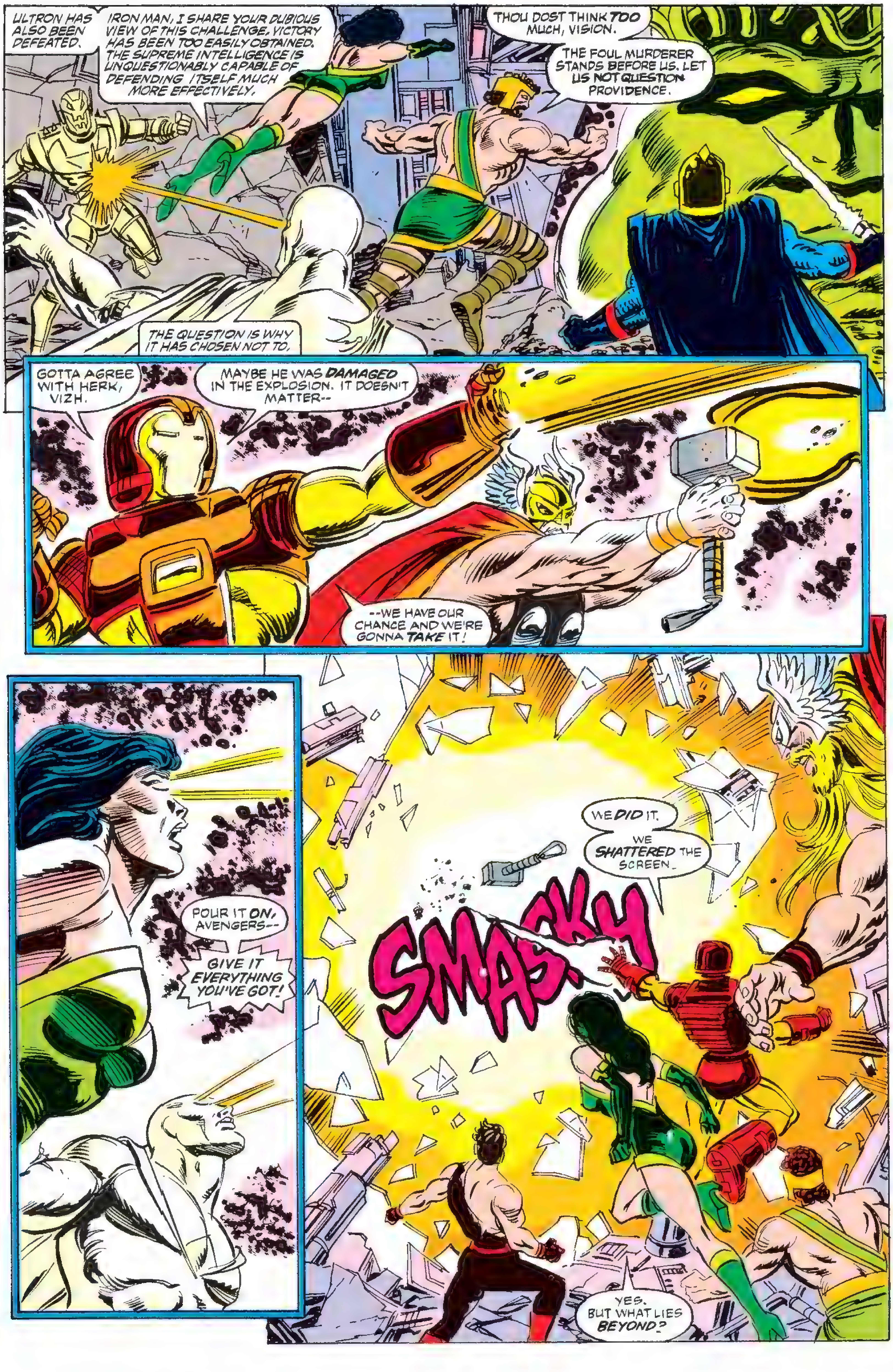

HERCULES IS *RIGHT*! LOOK AROUND YOU, MAN!
BY ZURAS, THIS WAS *GENOCIDE*! IS THERE *ICE* IN YOUR VEINS?!
SERSI... BELIEVE ME, MY *GUT* WANTS HIM TO *PAY* AS MUCH AS YOU.
BUT WE *CANNOT* KILL. WE ARE NOT JUDGE, JURY AND EXECUTIONER. IT IS AS *SIMPLE* AS THAT.
IT IS AS *SIMPLE* AS VENGEANCE, CAPTAIN! A MATTER OF *RIGHT* OVER *WRONG*!
OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH.
IRON MAN?!
FSHAMM
I'M THE ONLY *ORIGINAL* AVENGER PRESENT... AND I'M PULLING *RANK*, CAP.
I *DON'T* AGREE WITH YOU. THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE IS A *MACHINE*... A SOULLESS PIECE OF HARDWARE...
...THAT WE WILL *DESTROY* SO THAT *NOTHING* LIKE THIS WILL EVER HAPPEN AGAIN.
WHO'S WITH ME?
I'M SORRY, CAP.
MAYBE WE *CAN'T* BRING THE DEAD BACK... BUT WE CAN AT LEAST *AVENGE* 'EM.
HECK... IT'S OUR *NAME*!
WELL SAID, KNIGHT. *WELL SAID*!
I UNDERSTAND -- THEN -- THAT YOU OTHERS *AGREE* WITH CAP?
YOU UNDERSTAND *CORRECTLY*, IRON MAN.
MANOMAN, SHELLHEAD... DON'T *DO* THIS!
WE *CANNOT* JOIN IN A *KILLING* EXPEDITION... NO MATTER WHAT THE PROVOCATION.
YEAH. WE'RE THE *AVENGERS*...
...WE DON'T *DO* THINGS LIKE THIS!

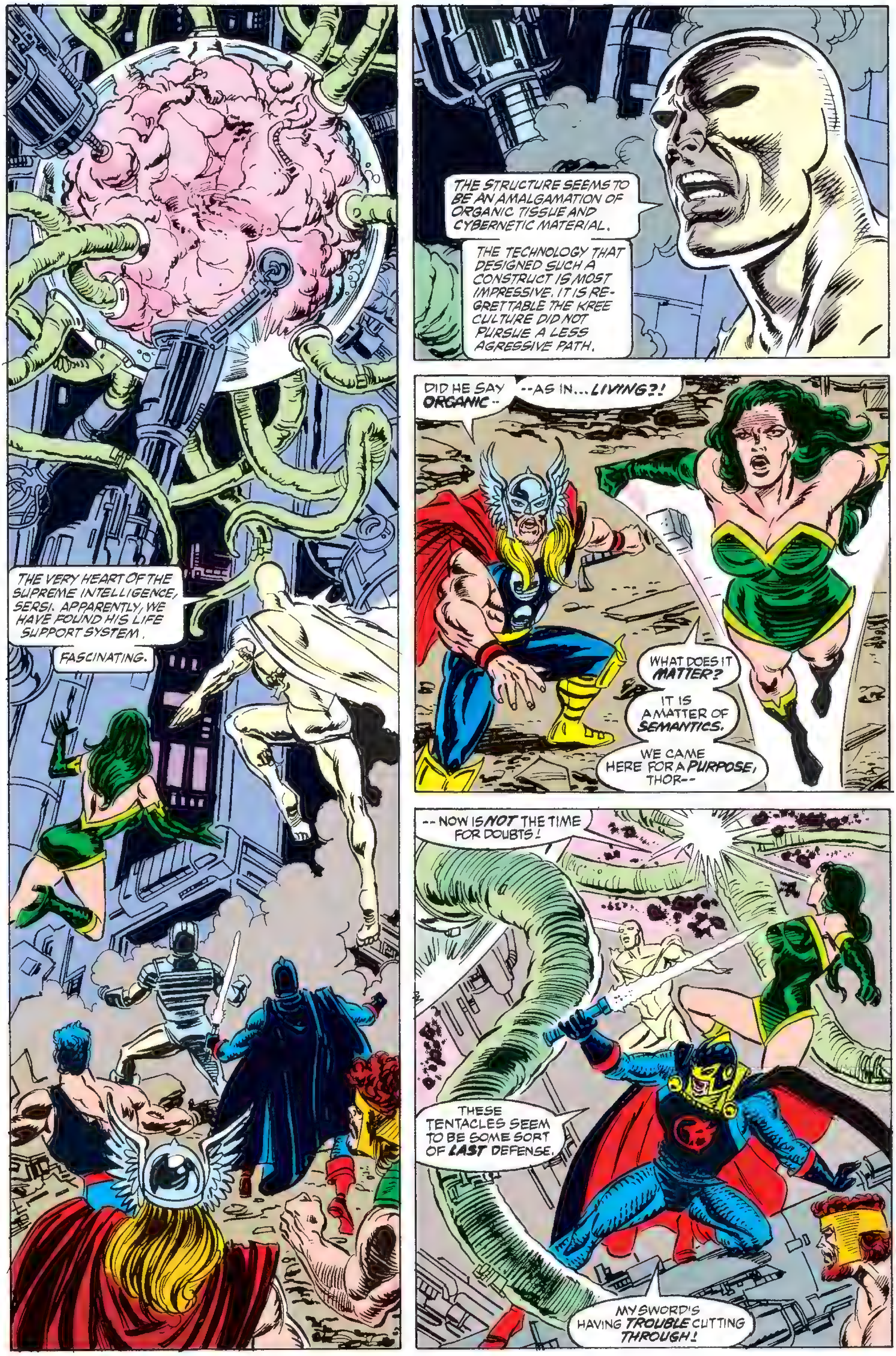

WHERE, THEN, IS YOUR *PRIDE*, TERRAN?
YOU, NO LESS THAN I, WERE *USED* IN THIS AFFAIR. THIS IS ABOUT *REVENGE!*
NO, DEATHBIRD, IT'S ABOUT *JUSTICE*.
AND IT'S *STRICTLY* AN AVENGERS AFFAIR. KINDLY BUT *OUT*.
SIMON, WE *ALL* MADE A VOW *NEVER* TO KILL.
IF YOU ARE *WRONG* ABOUT THIS, CAN YOU DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENCES?
WE'RE NOT WRONG, WANDA.
I WISH YOU COULD *SEE* THAT.
LET'S GO, PEOPLE.
WE HAVE A *JOB* TO DO.
THOR -- *LISTEN* TO ME, BUD! YOU'RE GETTING INTO *VERY* MUDDY WATERS HERE!
CAP'S RIGHT-- THE INTELLIGENCE *IS* A LIVING THING!
YOU ALWAYS THINK CAP'S RIGHT, WENDELL. THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM.
ONE DAY YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO LEARN TO *THINK* FOR YOURSELF!
CAPTAIN, I HONOR THEE AS OUR LEADER -- BUT TODAY, THOU ART MOST GRIEVIOUSLY MISGUIDED.
TO LET THIS MENACE LIVE *DISHONORS* US ALL... AND BRINGS SHAME TO THE NAME AVENGER.
I SEE NOW THAT AT LEAST *SOME* OF YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A *WARRIOR*.
SHUT UP, DEATHBIRD!
CAP, DO YOU WANT ME TO STOP THEM?
NO.
LET THEM GO.

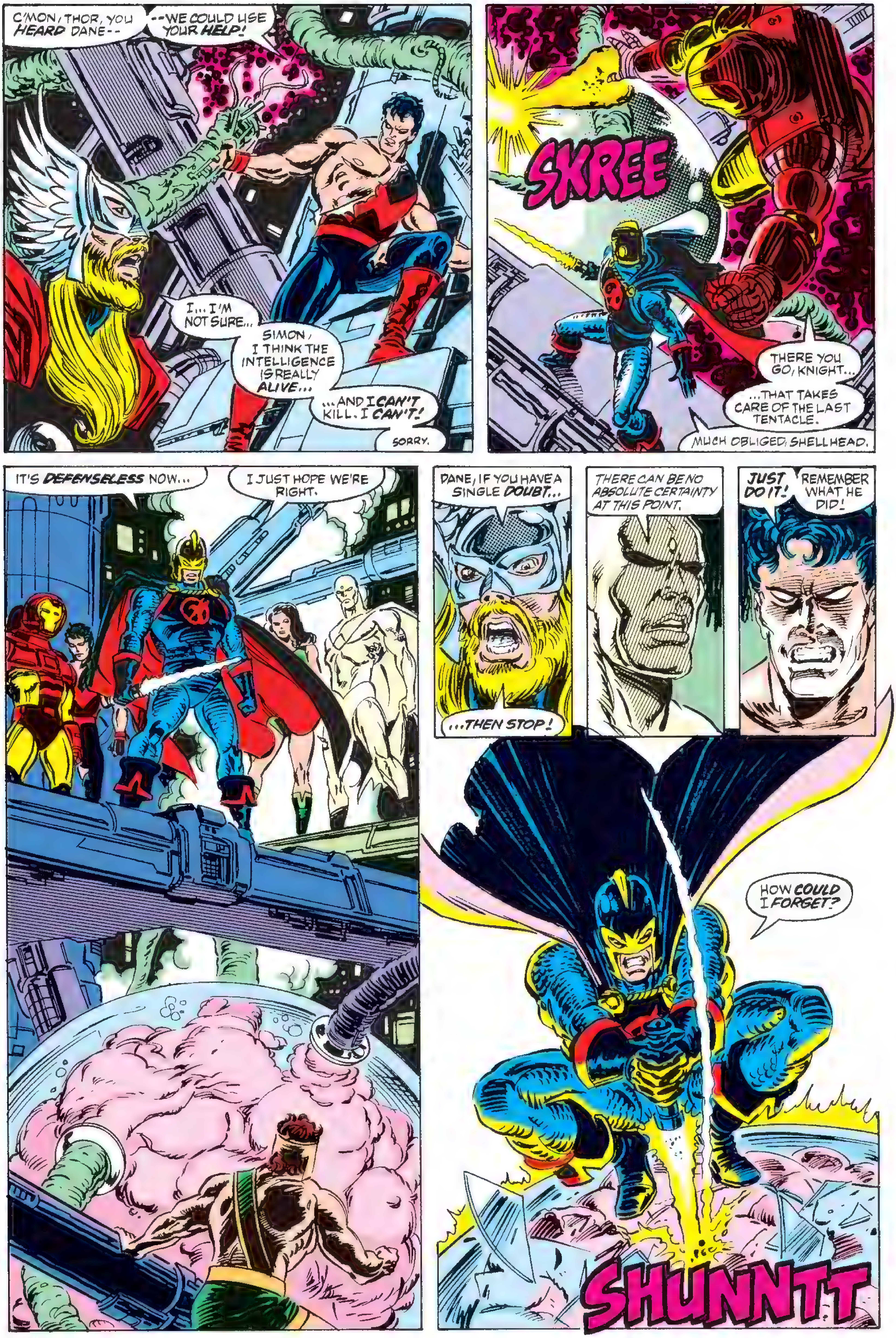

THE CITADEL.
AH--THE *RENEGADE* AVENGERS. YOU WERE EXPECTED.
I MONITORED YOUR SPIRITED DEBATE, TERRANS, EVEN AS I NOW SENSE YOUR *DOUBTS*.
YOU PRESENT A FACE OF MORAL CERTITUDE, BUT YOU DON'T *REALLY* KNOW, DO YOU? AM I A CONSTRUCT --OR AM I ALIVE? YOU *FEAR* THE ANSWER!
YOU'RE *DREAMING*, INTELLIGENCE! WE'RE NOT AFRAID--
--JUST *DETERMINED* TO END YOUR MADNESS *NOW*!
FSSSMMM
I DON'T THINK SO, LITTLE MAN--
--I DON'T THINK SO *AT ALL*!
WHA--?! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

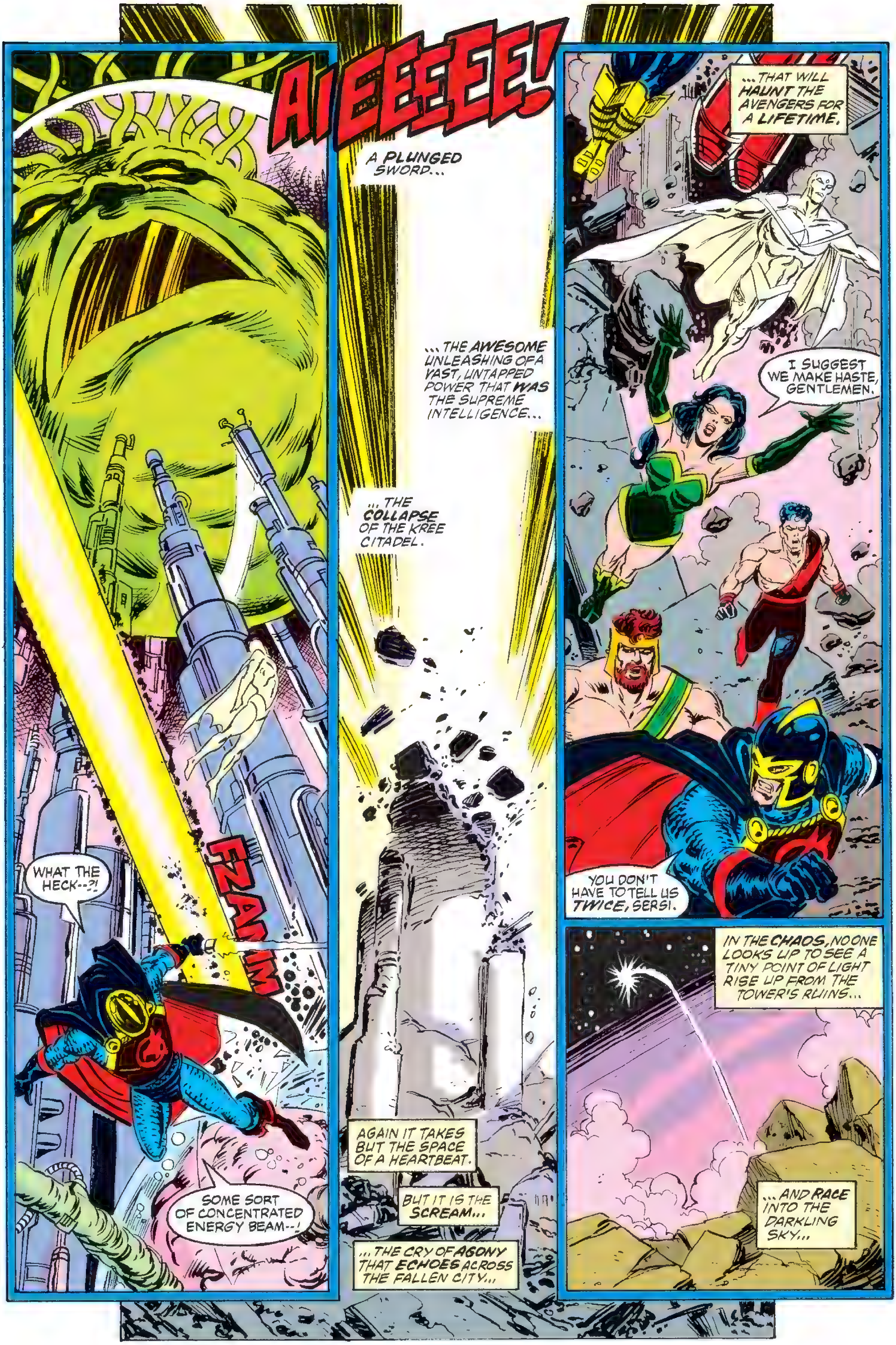

I AM *PROTECTING* MYSELF, AVENGERS, AS ANY LIFE FORM WOULD WHEN UNDER ATTACK.
MY STARFORCE MAY BE OFF-PLANET, BUT DID YOU THINK I WOULD LEAVE MYSELF *TOTALLY* UNDEFENDED?
FROM YOUR MEMORIES I HAVE FOUND THE SEEDS OF YOUR *DEFEAT*.
THAT'S *THOR!* THE *REAL* THOR!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?!
CALM DOWN, AVENGER. IT'S NOT HIM.
THEY'RE ONLY IMAGES *PLUCKED* FROM OUR MINDS TO CONFUSE US.
THEY ARE *MORE* THAN MERE IMAGES. I HAVE GIVEN THEM FORM AND SUBSTANCE TO *DESTROY* YOU.
YEAH... BUT DID YOU HAVE TO GO AND PICK MY BROTHER, *ERIC*?
THE *GRIM REAPER*, EH?
DON'T WORRY, SIMON.

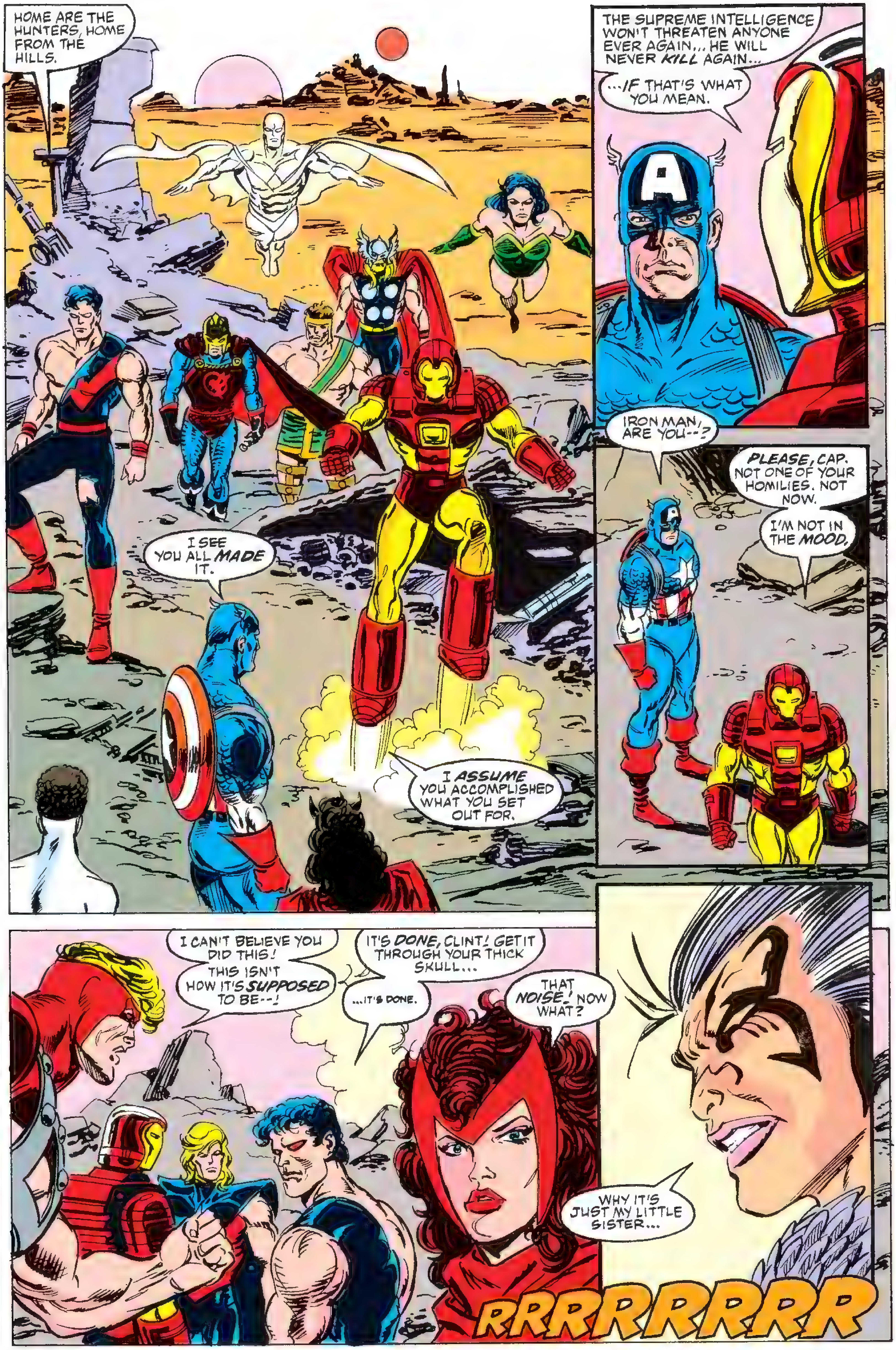

...THIS *REJECT* FROM CENTRAL CASTING IS SUPPOSED TO BE MY UNCLE, GARRETT--
--THE *ORIGINAL* SLIGHTLY FELONIOUS BLACK KNIGHT!
FSSWATT
SO, CHEER UP. *EVERY* FAMILY'S GOT THEIR SHARE OF *EMBARRASSING* RELATIVES.
THE DEFIANT *KRO* WAS NO MEMBER OF MY FAMILY, DANE WHITMAN!
STILL, HE PRESENTED A FAR MORE *FORMIDABLE* FOE THAN THIS CONJURING.
SMAK
YEA, *VERILY*, SERSI! THE *TRUE* CERBERUS DIDST GUARD THE GATES OF HADES 'GAINST MY ENTRY MOST *SAVAGELY*.
THIS REPLICA FIGHT PALES IN COMPARISON.
SAME HERE, HERKSTER!
THIS THOR-CLONE'S DOWN FOR THE COUNT!
SKREEEEE
AND THIS TAKES CARE OF THE *MANDARIN*!
WHERE'S THE SUPREME INTELLECT IN PICKING FOES WE'VE *ALREADY* DEFEATED, INTELLIGENCE?
CAN YOU BE *SLIPPING*?


ULTRON HAS ALSO BEEN DEFEATED.
IRON MAN, I SHARE YOUR DUBIOUS VIEW OF THIS CHALLENGE. VICTORY HAS BEEN TOO EASILY OBTAINED. THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE IS UNQUESTIONABLY CAPABLE OF DEFENDING ITSELF MUCH MORE EFFECTIVELY.
THE QUESTION IS WHY IT HAS CHOSEN NOT TO.
THOU DOST THINK *TOO* MUCH, VISION.
THE FOUL MURDERER STANDS BEFORE US. LET **US NOT QUESTION** PROVIDENCE.
GOTTA AGREE WITH HERK, VIZH.
MAYBE HE WAS ***DAMAGED*** IN THE EXPLOSION. IT DOESN'T MATTER--
--WE HAVE OUR CHANCE AND WE'RE GONNA ***TAKE*** IT!
POUR IT ON, AVENGERS--
GIVE IT ***EVERYTHING*** YOU'VE GOT!
SMASH
WE ***DID*** IT.
WE ***SHATTERED*** THE SCREEN.
YES. BUT WHAT LIES ***BEYOND?***

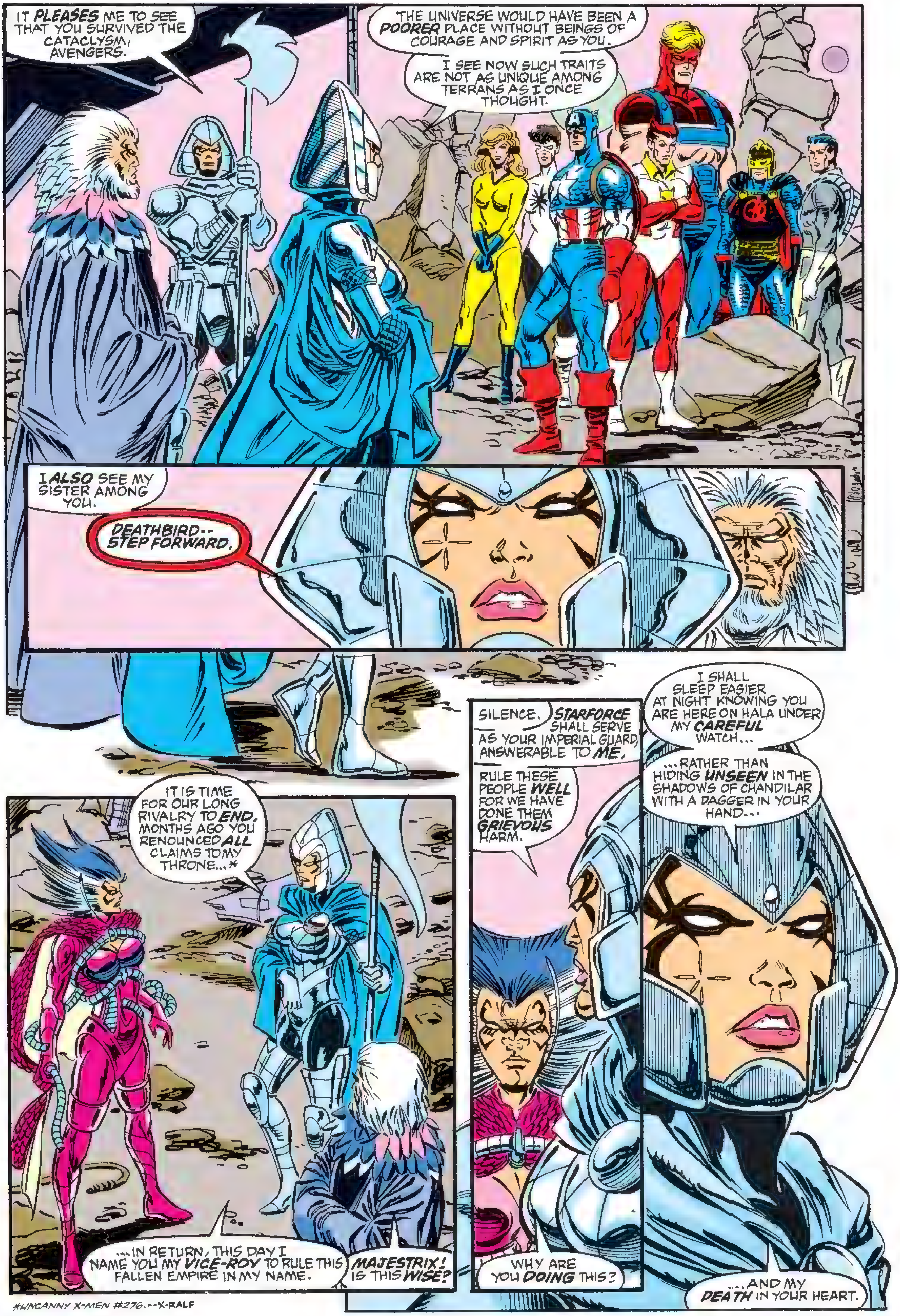

THE VERY HEART OF THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE, SERSI. APPARENTLY, WE HAVE FOUND HIS LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM.
FASCINATING.
THE STRUCTURE SEEMS TO BE AN AMALGAMATION OF ORGANIC TISSUE AND CYBERNETIC MATERIAL.
THE TECHNOLOGY THAT DESIGNED SUCH A CONSTRUCT IS MOST IMPRESSIVE. IT IS REGRETTABLE THE KREE CULTURE DID NOT PURSUE A LESS AGRESSIVE PATH.
DID HE SAY ORGANIC--
--AS IN... LIVING?!
WHAT DOES IT MATTER?
IT IS A MATTER OF SEMANTICS.
WE CAME HERE FOR A PURPOSE, THOR--
--NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR DOUBTS!
THESE TENTACLES SEEM TO BE SOME SORT OF LAST DEFENSE.
MY SWORD'S HAVING TROUBLE CUTTING THROUGH!


C'MON, THOR, YOU **HEARD** DANE--
--WE COULD USE YOUR **HELP!**
I... I'M NOT SURE...
SIMON, I THINK THE INTELLIGENCE IS REALLY **ALIVE...**
...AND I **CAN'T** KILL. I **CAN'T!**
SORRY.
SKREE
THERE YOU GO, KNIGHT...
...THAT TAKES CARE OF THE LAST TENTACLE.
MUCH OBLIGED, SHELLHEAD.
IT'S **DEFENSELESS** NOW...
I JUST HOPE WE'RE RIGHT.
DANE, IF YOU HAVE A SINGLE **DOUBT...**
...THEN STOP!
THERE CAN BE NO ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY AT THIS POINT.
JUST DO IT!
REMEMBER WHAT HE DID!
HOW **COULD** I **FORGET?**
SHUNNTT

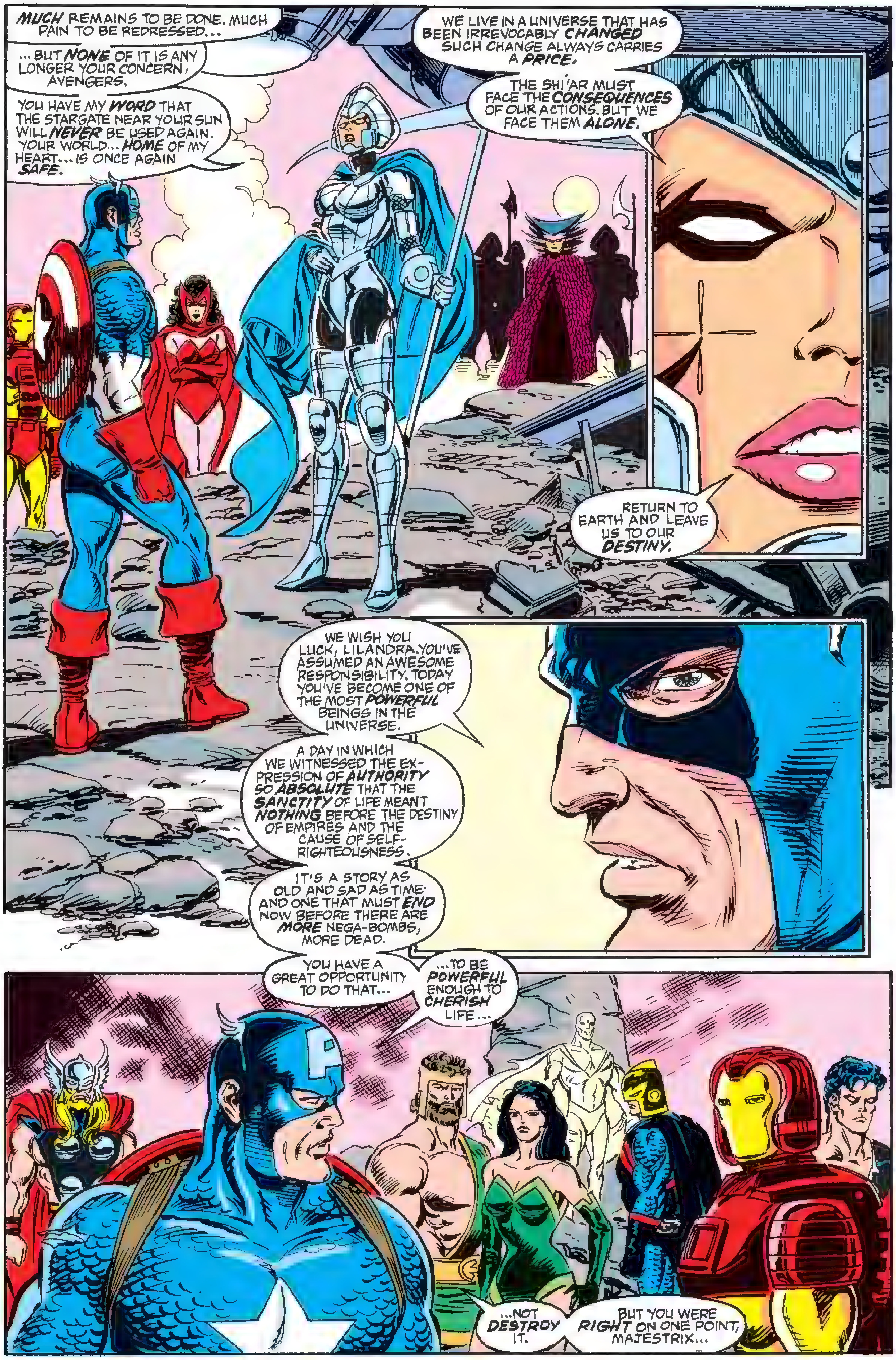

WHAT THE HECK--?!
FZAMM
SOME SORT OF CONCENTRATED ENERGY BEAM--!
AIEEEEE!
A PLUNGED SWORD...
...THE AWESOME UNLEASHING OF A VAST, UNTAPPED POWER THAT WAS THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE...
...THE COLLAPSE OF THE KREE CITADEL.
AGAIN IT TAKES BUT THE SPACE OF A HEARTBEAT.
BUT IT IS THE SCREAM...
...THE CRY OF AGONY THAT ECHOES ACROSS THE FALLEN CITY...
...THAT WILL HAUNT THE AVENGERS FOR A LIFETIME.
I SUGGEST WE MAKE HASTE, GENTLEMEN.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL US TWICE, SERSI.
IN THE CHAOS, NO ONE LOOKS UP TO SEE A TINY POINT OF LIGHT RISE UP FROM THE TOWER'S RUINS...
...AND RACE INTO THE DARKLING SKY...

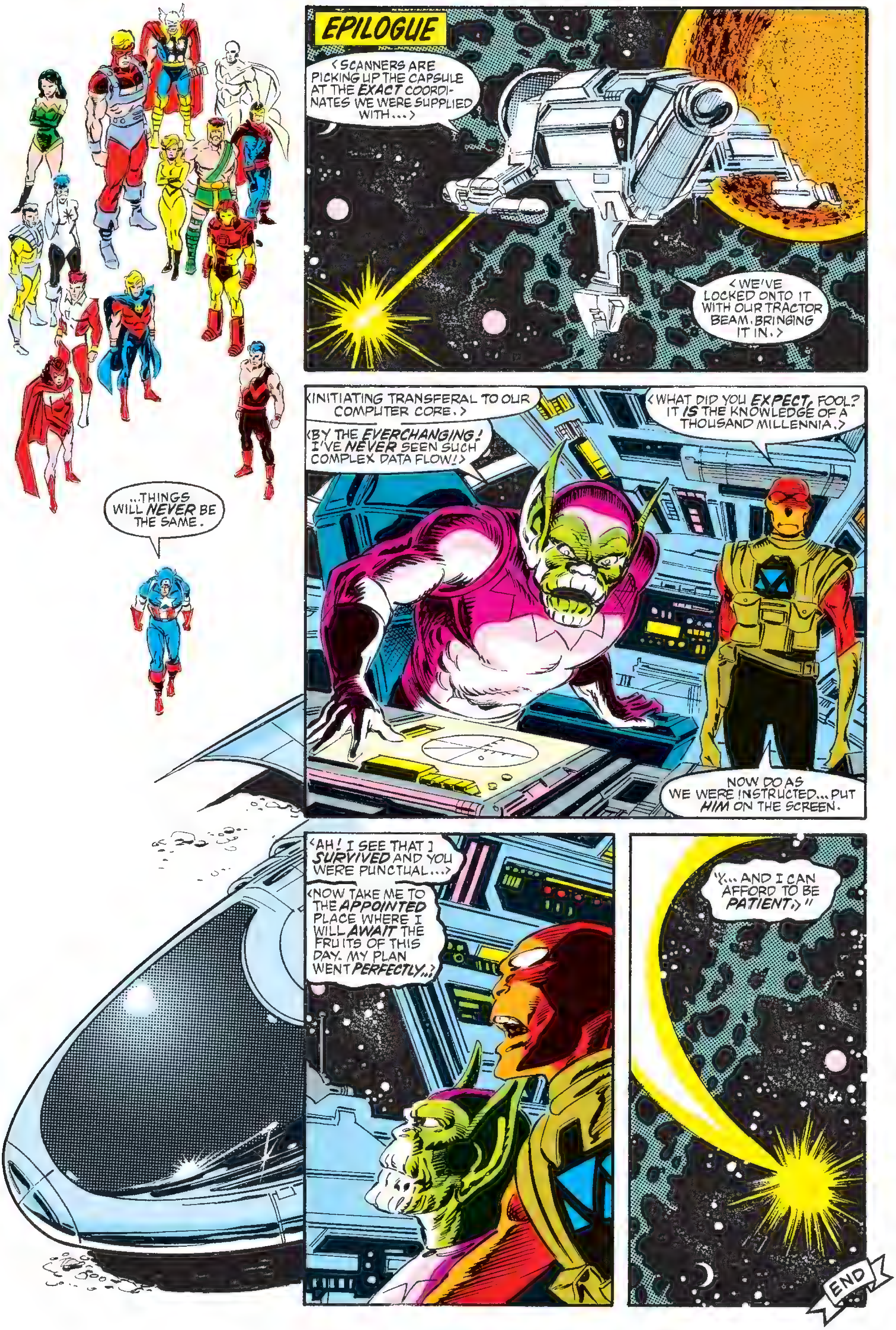

HOME ARE THE HUNTERS, HOME FROM THE HILLS.
I SEE YOU ALL *MADE* IT.
I *ASSUME* YOU ACCOMPLISHED WHAT YOU SET OUT FOR.
THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE WON'T THREATEN ANYONE EVER AGAIN... HE WILL NEVER *KILL* AGAIN...
...*IF* THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN.
IRON MAN, ARE YOU--?
PLEASE, CAP. NOT ONE OF YOUR HOMILIES. NOT NOW.
I'M NOT IN THE *MOOD*.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DID THIS! THIS ISN'T HOW IT'S *SUPPOSED* TO BE--!
IT'S *DONE*, CLINT! GET IT THROUGH YOUR THICK SKULL...
...IT'S DONE.
THAT *NOISE*! NOW WHAT?
WHY IT'S JUST MY LITTLE SISTER...
RRRRRRRR

"...COME TO CLAIM HER REWARD!!"
ROARRRR
KNOW YE ALL, GENTLE BEINGS...
...BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST, BY RIGHT OF PRECIOUS BLOOD AND IN THE NAMES OF THE GODS, SHARRA AND KY'THRI...
...I, LILANDRA NERAMANI, MAJESTRIX SHI'AR...
...TAKE POSSESSION OF THIS PLANET AND ALL HER DOMINIONS IN THE NAME OF THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM.
FROM THIS MOMENT FORWARD, ALL WHO BOWED BEFORE HALA SHALL BE SUBJECT TO CHANDILAR. ALL THAT WAS KREE IS NOW SHI'AR.
SO HAVE I SPOKEN, SO SHALL IT BE DONE!


IT PLEASES ME TO SEE THAT YOU SURVIVED THE CATACLYSM, AVENGERS.
THE UNIVERSE WOULD HAVE BEEN A POORER PLACE WITHOUT BEINGS OF COURAGE AND SPIRIT AS YOU.
I SEE NOW SUCH TRAITS ARE NOT AS UNIQUE AMONG TERRANS AS I ONCE THOUGHT.
I ALSO SEE MY SISTER AMONG YOU.
DEATHBIRD-- STEP FORWARD.
IT IS TIME FOR OUR LONG RIVALRY TO END. MONTHS AGO YOU RENOUNCED ALL CLAIMS TO MY THRONE...*
...IN RETURN, THIS DAY I NAME YOU MY VICE-ROY TO RULE THIS FALLEN EMPIRE IN MY NAME.
MAJESTRIX! IS THIS WISE?
SILENCE. STARFORCE SHALL SERVE AS YOUR IMPERIAL GUARD, ANSWERABLE TO ME.
RULE THESE PEOPLE WELL FOR WE HAVE DONE THEM GRIEVOUS HARM.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
I SHALL SLEEP EASIER AT NIGHT KNOWING YOU ARE HERE ON HALA UNDER MY CAREFUL WATCH...
...RATHER THAN HIDING UNSEEN IN THE SHADOWS OF CHANDILAR WITH A DAGGER IN YOUR HAND...
...AND MY DEATH IN YOUR HEART.

*UNCANNY X-MEN #276.--X-RALF


MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE. MUCH PAIN TO BE REDRESSED...
...BUT NONE OF IT IS ANY LONGER YOUR CONCERN, AVENGERS.
YOU HAVE MY WORD THAT THE STARGATE NEAR YOUR SUN WILL NEVER BE USED AGAIN. YOUR WORLD... HOME OF MY HEART... IS ONCE AGAIN SAFE.
WE LIVE IN A UNIVERSE THAT HAS BEEN IRREVOCABLY CHANGED SUCH CHANGE ALWAYS CARRIES A PRICE.
THE SHI'AR MUST FACE THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS. BUT WE FACE THEM ALONE.
RETURN TO EARTH AND LEAVE US TO OUR DESTINY.
WE WISH YOU LUCK, LILANDRA. YOU'VE ASSUMED AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY. TODAY YOU'VE BECOME ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS IN THE UNIVERSE.
A DAY IN WHICH WE WITNESSED THE EXPRESSION OF AUTHORITY SO ABSOLUTE THAT THE SANCTITY OF LIFE MEANT NOTHING BEFORE THE DESTINY OF EMPIRES AND THE CAUSE OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.
IT'S A STORY AS OLD AND SAD AS TIME AND ONE THAT MUST END NOW BEFORE THERE ARE MORE NEGA-BOMBS, MORE DEAD.
YOU HAVE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO DO THAT...
...TO BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CHERISH LIFE...
BUT YOU WERE RIGHT ON ONE POINT, MAJESTRIX...
...NOT DESTROY IT.


EPILOGUE
<SCANNERS ARE PICKING UP THE CAPSULE AT THE EXACT COORDINATES WE WERE SUPPLIED WITH...>
<WE'VE LOCKED ONTO IT WITH OUR TRACTOR BEAM, BRINGING IT IN.>
...THINGS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.
<INITIATING TRANSFERAL TO OUR COMPUTER CORE.>
<BY THE EVERCHANGING! I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH COMPLEX DATA FLOW!>
<WHAT DID YOU EXPECT, FOOL? IT IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF A THOUSAND MILLENNIA.>
NOW DO AS WE WERE INSTRUCTED... PUT HIM ON THE SCREEN.
<AH! I SEE THAT I SURVIVED AND YOU WERE PUNCTUAL...>
<NOW TAKE ME TO THE APPOINTED PLACE WHERE I WILL AWAIT THE FRUITS OF THIS DAY. MY PLAN WENT PERFECTLY...>
"<...AND I CAN AFFORD TO BE PATIENT.>"
END

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AFTER THE STORM
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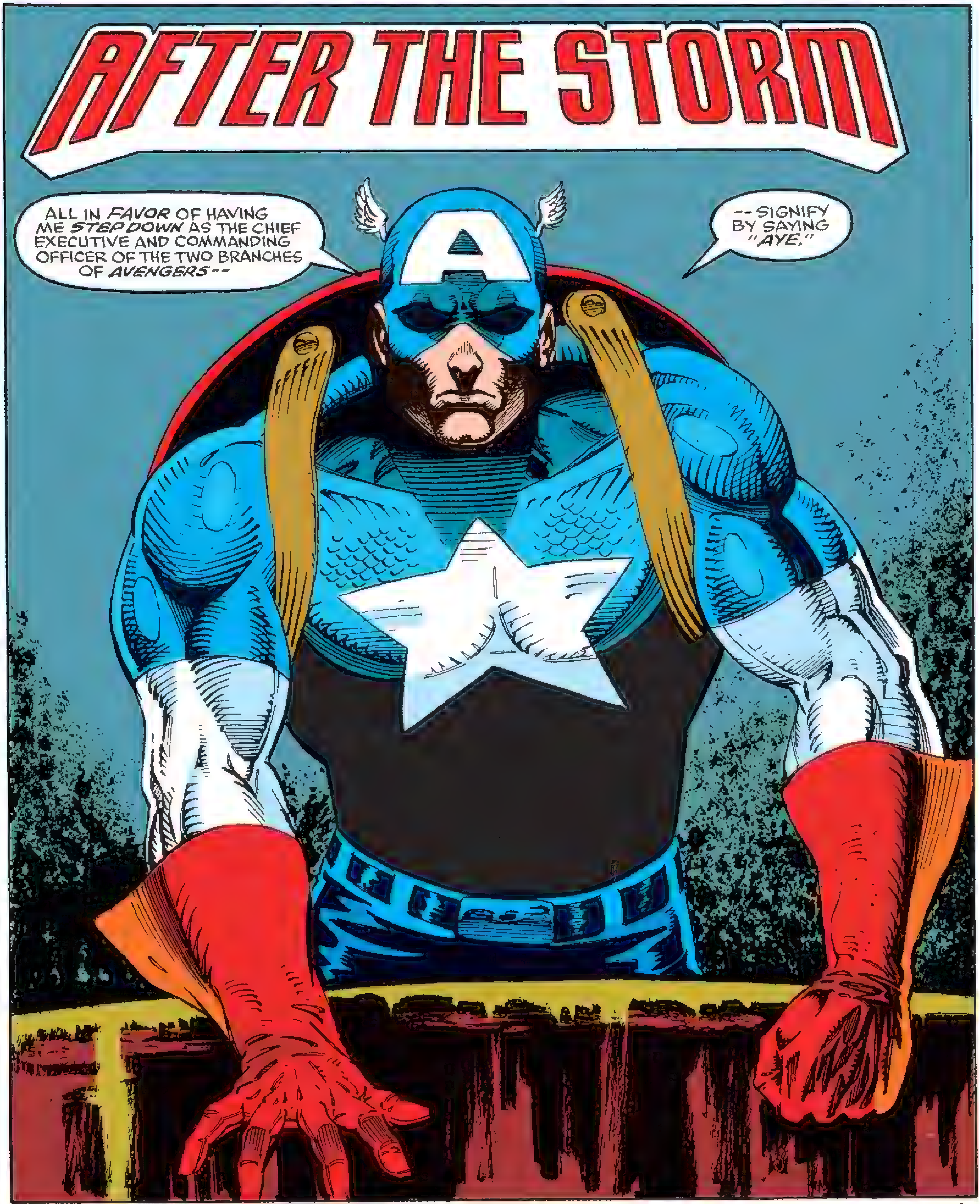
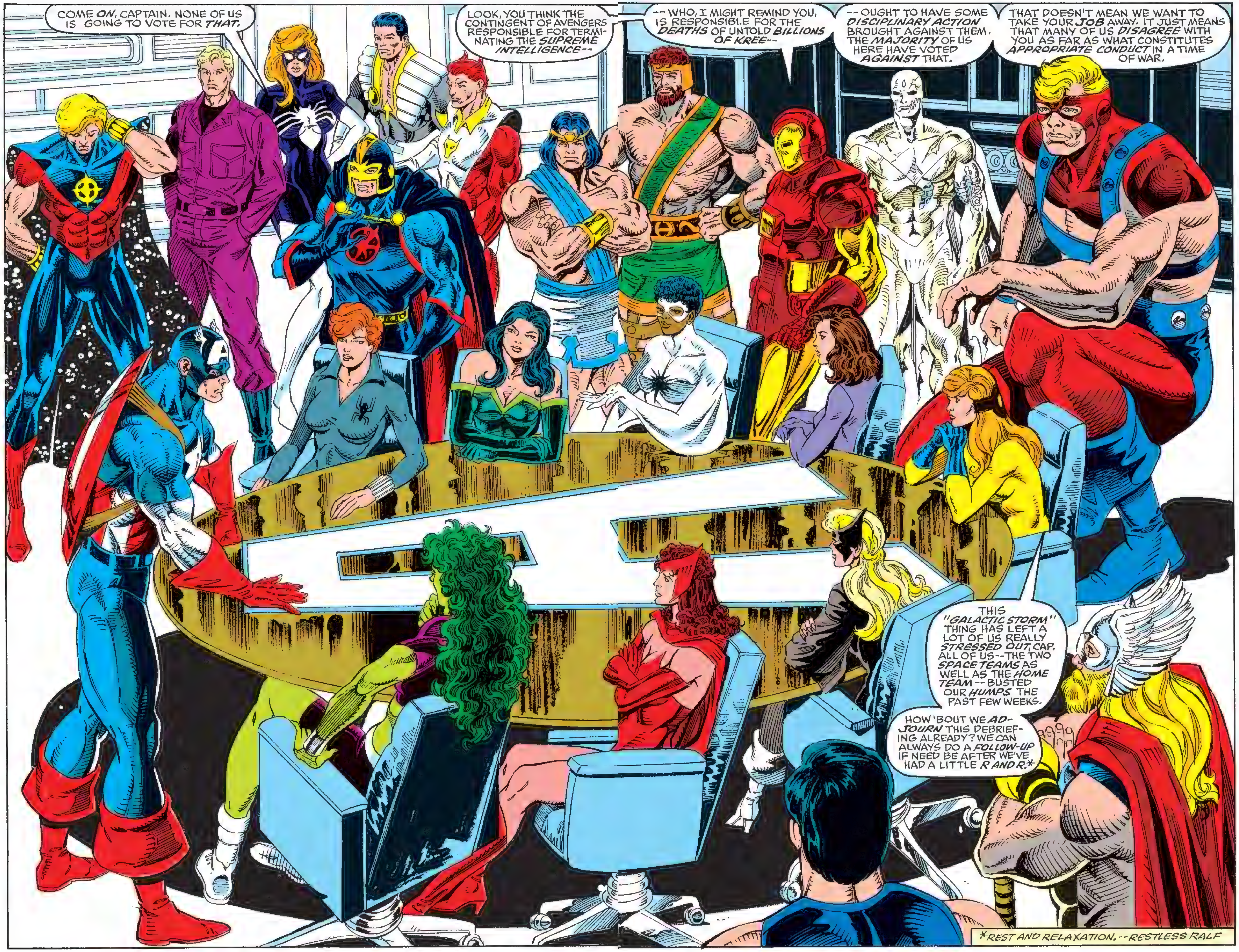
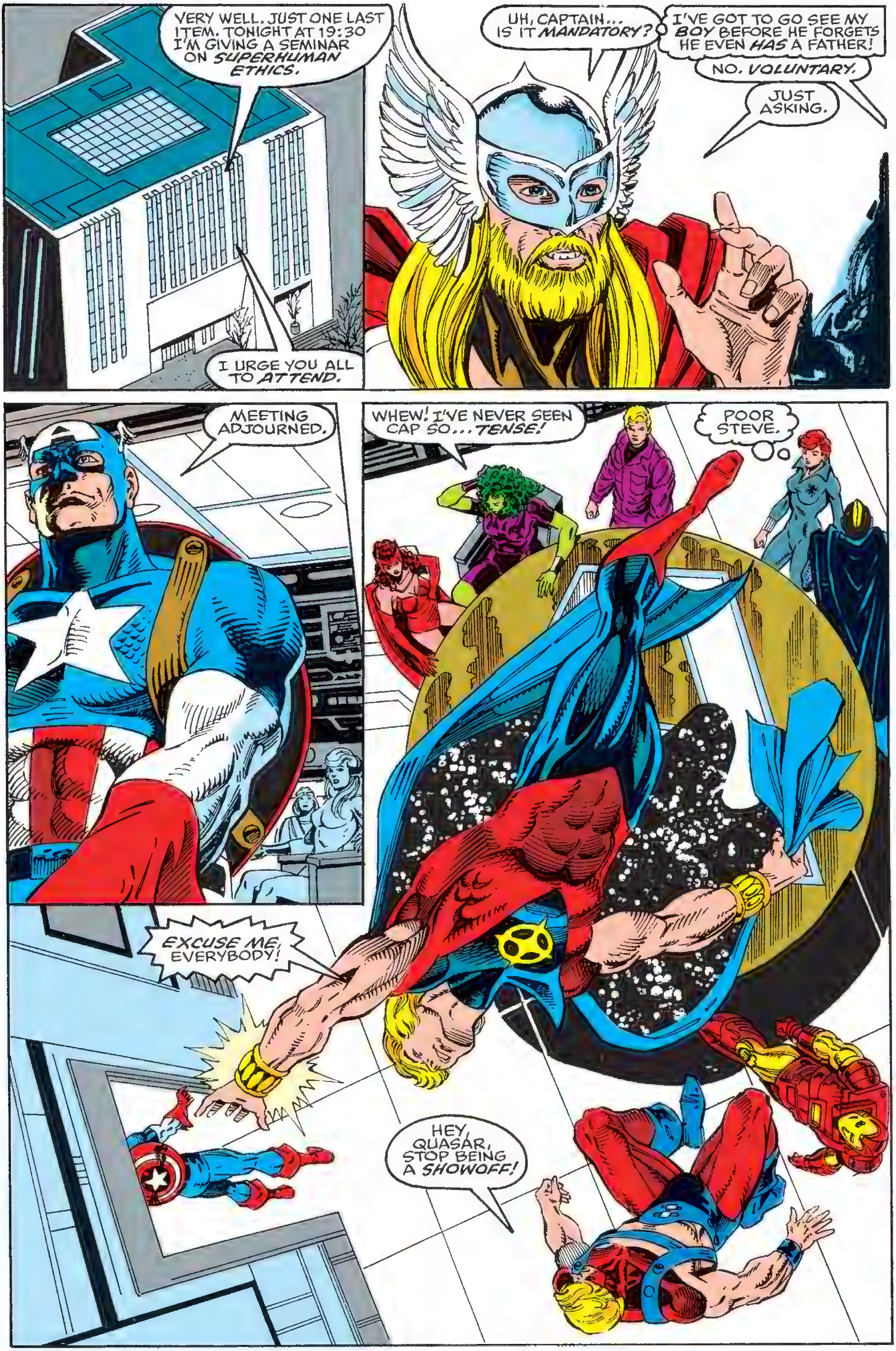
LEVINS / BULANADI

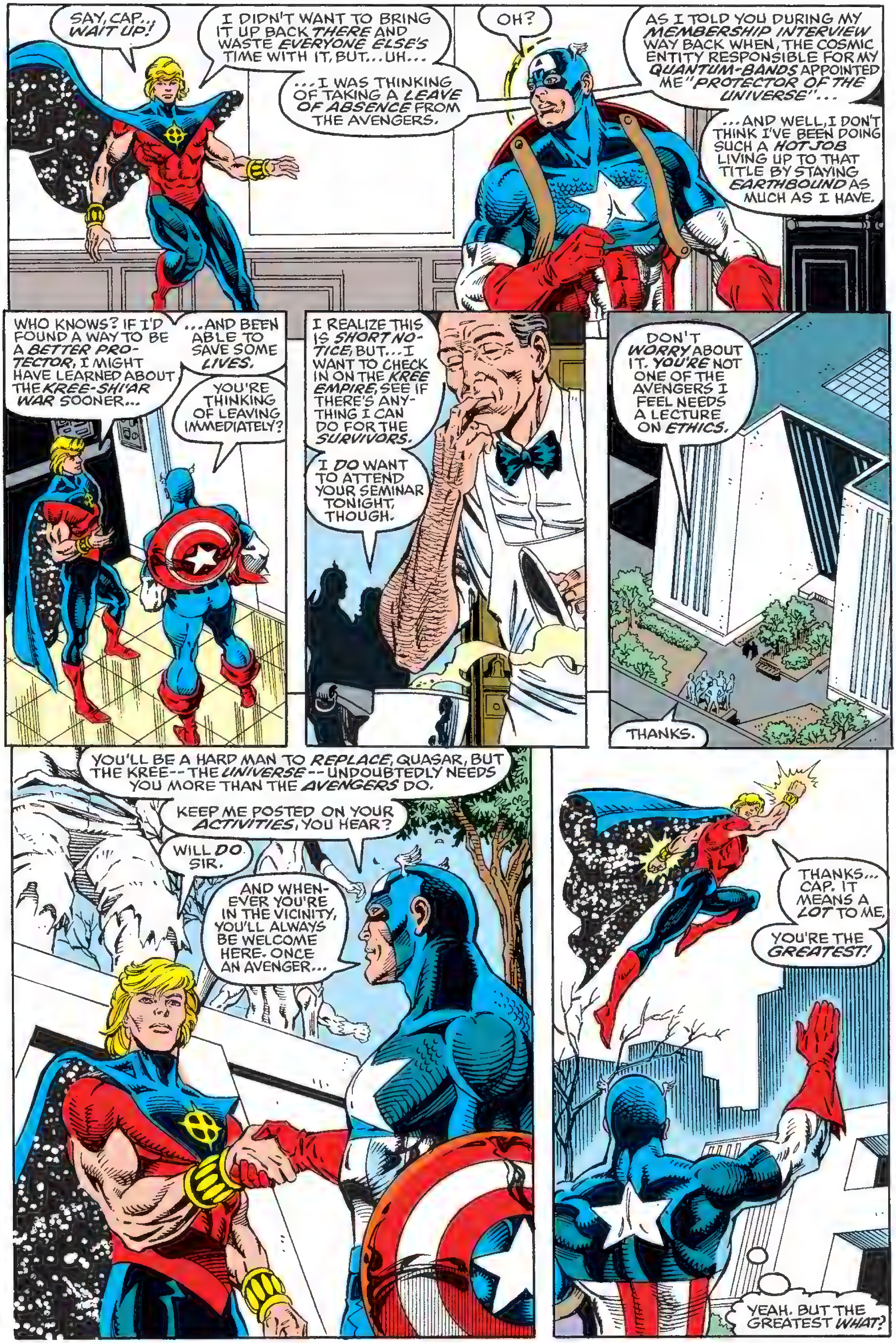
STEVE ROGERS . . . BORN IN THE U.S.A., RAISED TO CHERISH THE IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY, ENDOWED WITH A SUPERHUMAN PHYSIQUE, AND DRIVEN TO BE THE MOST CAPABLE COMBATANT IN THE WORLD. NOW AS BOTH LONE CRUSADER AND LEADER OF THE RENOWNED AVENGERS, HE FIGHTS AN ONGOING BATTLE FOR LIBERTY, JUSTICE, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM! Stan Lee presents: **CAPTAIN AMERICA!**

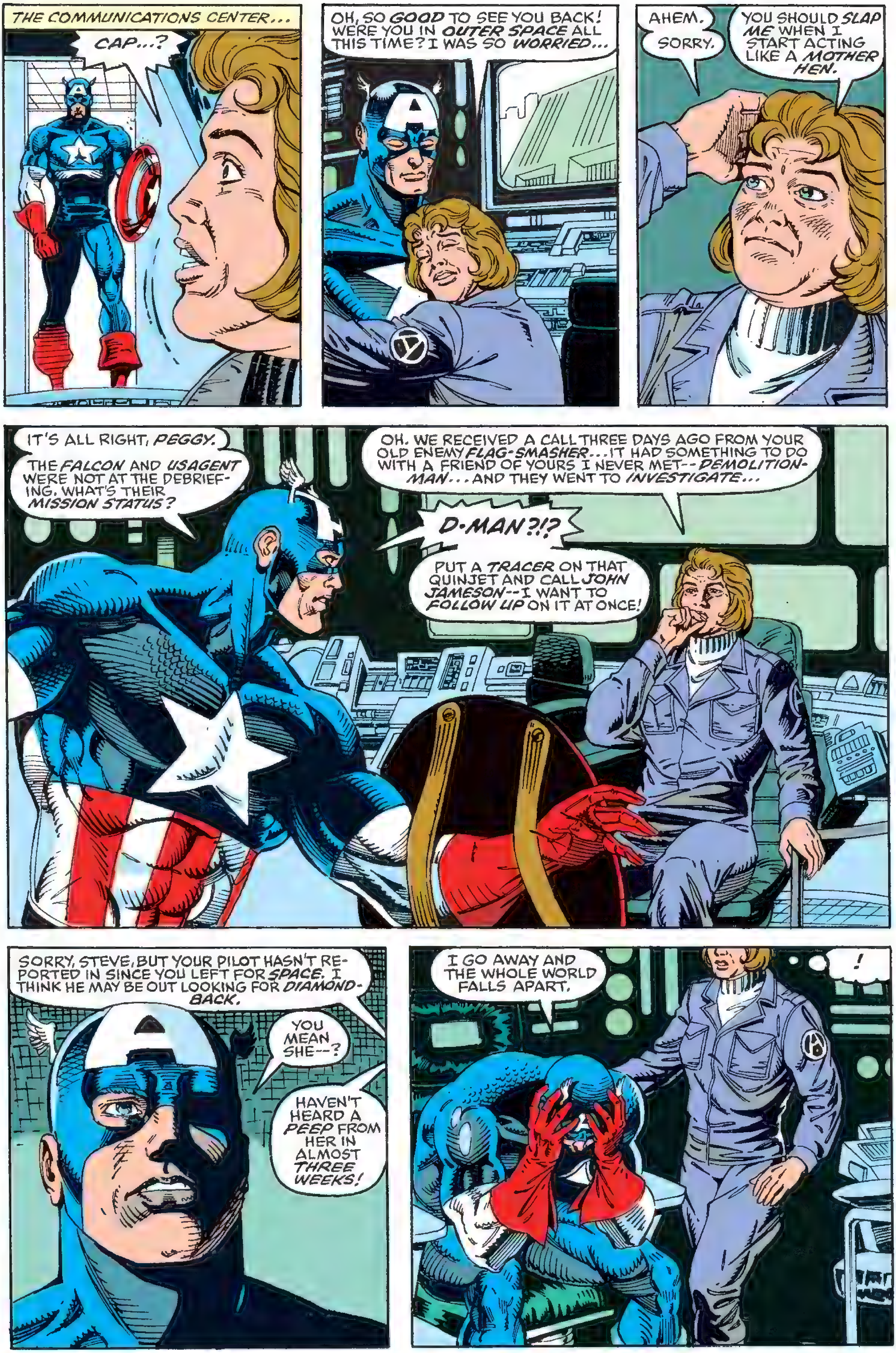

AFTER THE STORM
ALL IN *FAVOR* OF HAVING ME *STEP DOWN* AS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE TWO BRANCHES OF *AVENGERS*--
--SIGNIFY BY SAYING *"AYE."*

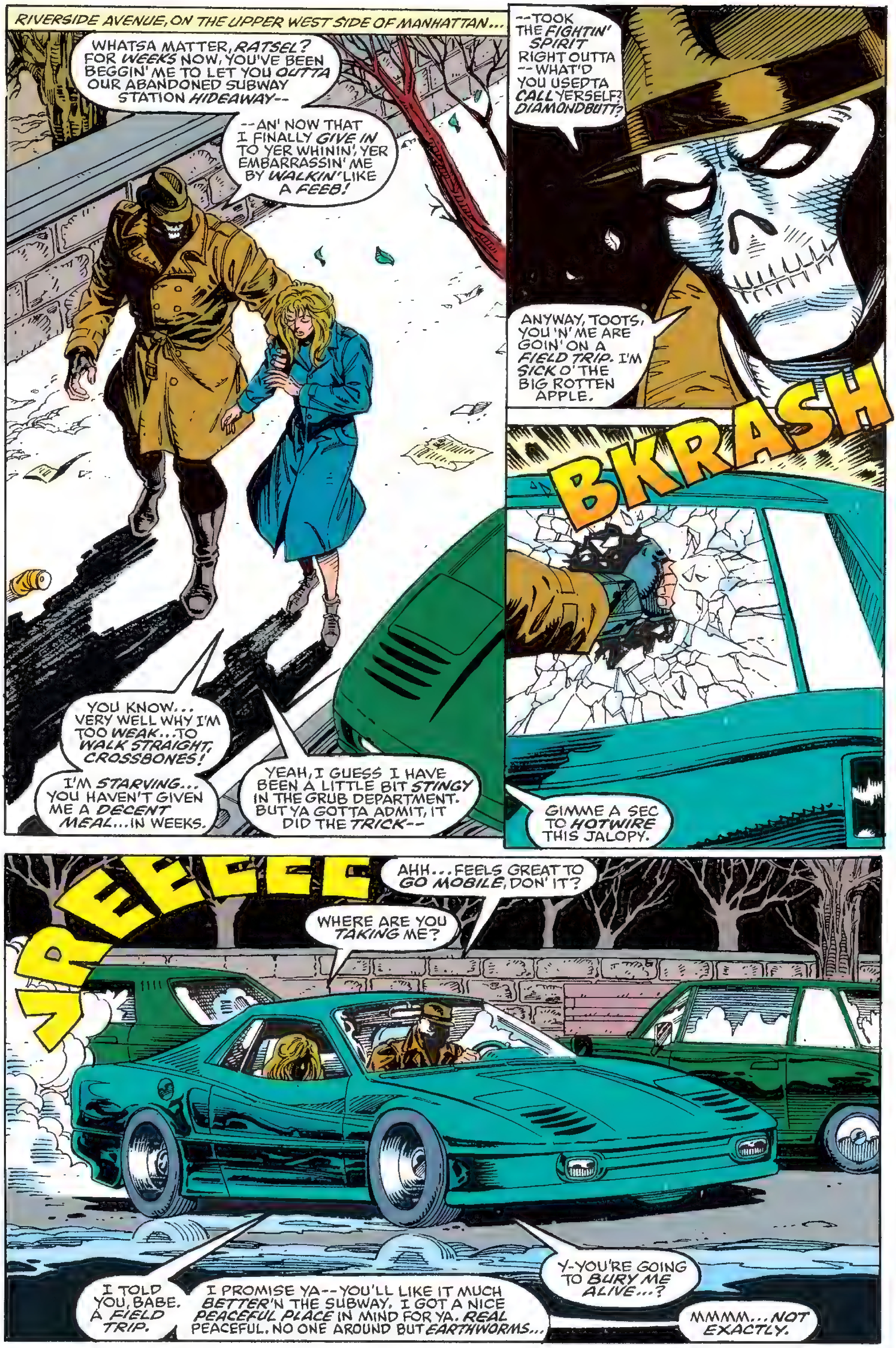
MARK GRUENWALD STORY | RIK LEVINS PENCILS | DANNY BULANADI INKS | JOE ROSEN LETTERS | SCHEELE/GOING COLORS | RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR | TOM DeFALCO COMMANDANT

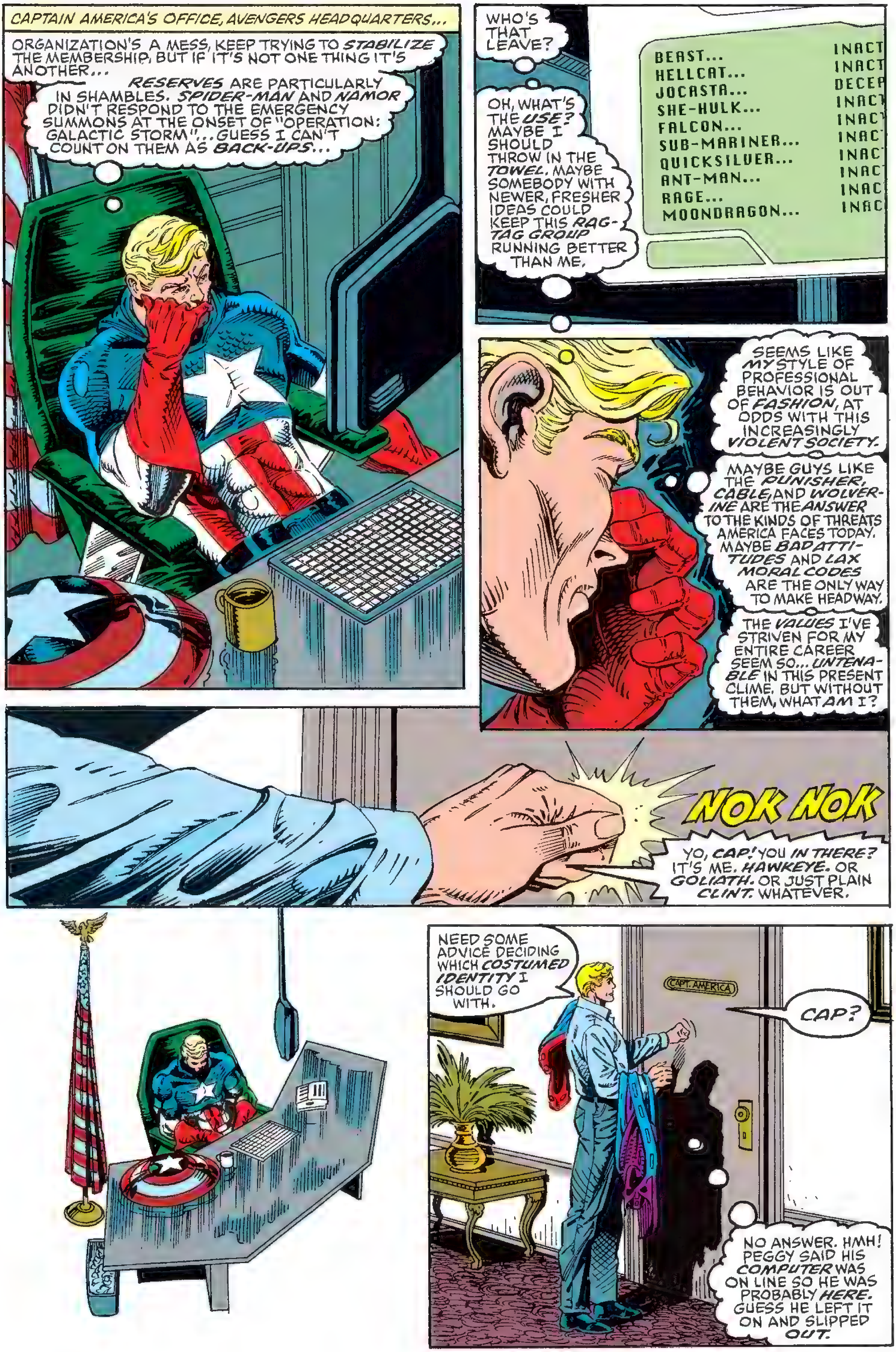

COME *ON*, CAPTAIN. NONE OF US IS GOING TO VOTE FOR *THAT.*
LOOK, YOU THINK THE CONTINGENT OF AVENGERS RESPONSIBLE FOR TERMINATING THE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE*--
--WHO, I MIGHT REMIND YOU, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE *DEATHS* OF UNTOLD *BILLIONS OF KREE*--
--OUGHT TO HAVE SOME *DISCIPLINARY ACTION* BROUGHT AGAINST THEM. THE *MAJORITY* OF US HERE HAVE VOTED *AGAINST* THAT.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE WANT TO TAKE YOUR *JOB* AWAY. IT JUST MEANS THAT MANY OF US *DISAGREE* WITH YOU AS FAR AS WHAT CONSTITUTES *APPROPRIATE CONDUCT* IN A TIME OF WAR.
THIS *"GALACTIC STORM"* THING HAS LEFT A LOT OF US REALLY *STRESSED OUT*, CAP. ALL OF US--THE TWO *SPACE TEAMS* AS WELL AS THE *HOME TEAM*--BUSTED OUR *HUMPS* THE PAST FEW WEEKS.
HOW 'BOUT WE *ADJOURN* THIS DEBRIEFING ALREADY? WE CAN ALWAYS DO A *FOLLOW-UP* IF NEED BE AFTER WE'VE HAD A LITTLE *R AND R.**
*REST AND RELAXATION. --RESTLESS RALF

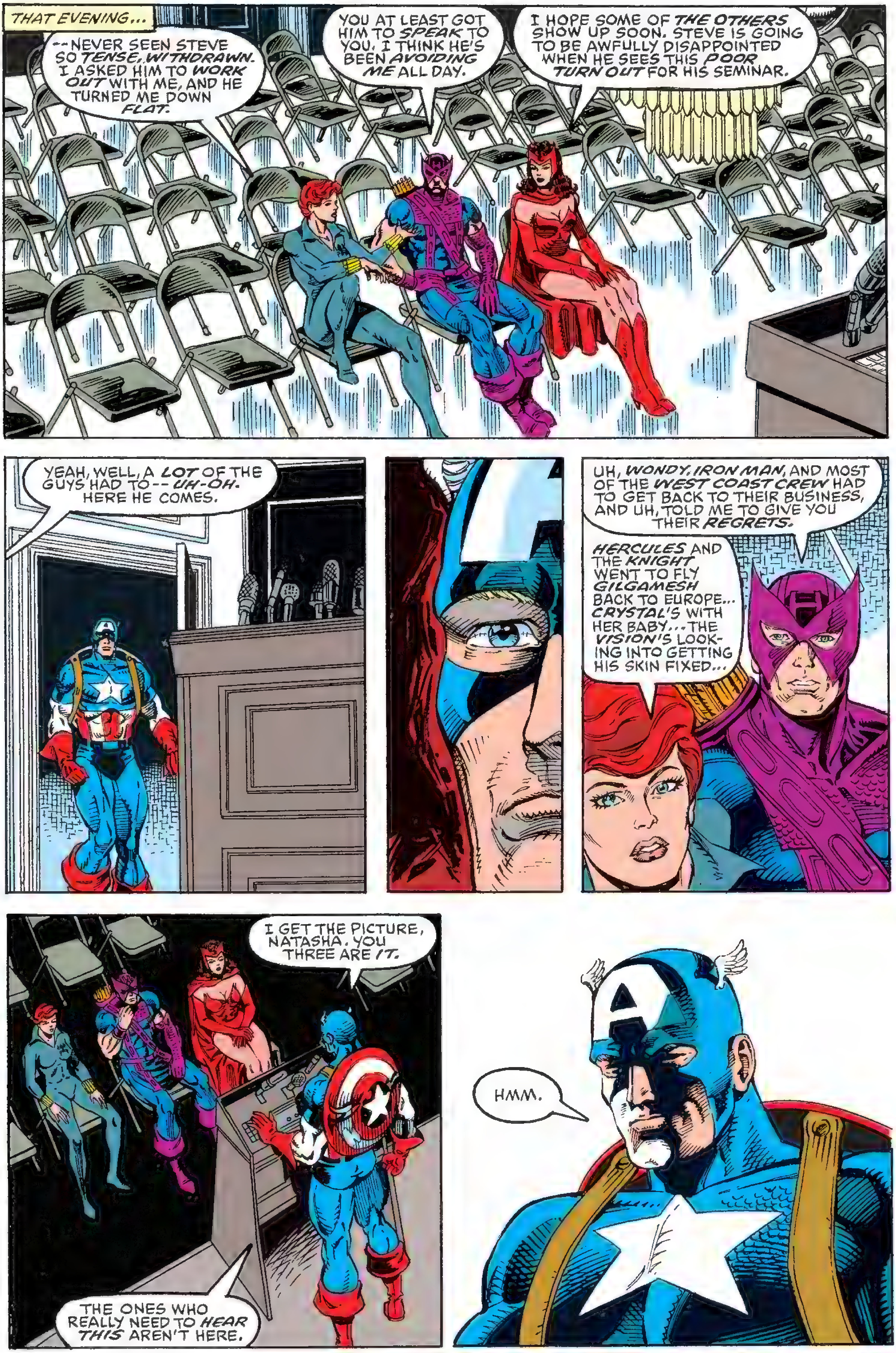

VERY WELL. JUST ONE LAST ITEM. TONIGHT AT 19:30 I'M GIVING A SEMINAR ON *SUPERHUMAN ETHICS.*
I URGE YOU ALL TO *ATTEND.*
UH, CAPTAIN... IS IT *MANDATORY?*
I'VE GOT TO GO SEE MY *BOY* BEFORE HE FORGETS HE EVEN *HAS* A FATHER!
NO. *VOLUNTARY.*
JUST ASKING.
MEETING ADJOURNED.
WHEW! I'VE NEVER SEEN CAP SO... *TENSE!*
POOR STEVE.
EXCUSE ME, EVERYBODY!
HEY, QUASAR, STOP BEING A *SHOWOFF!*

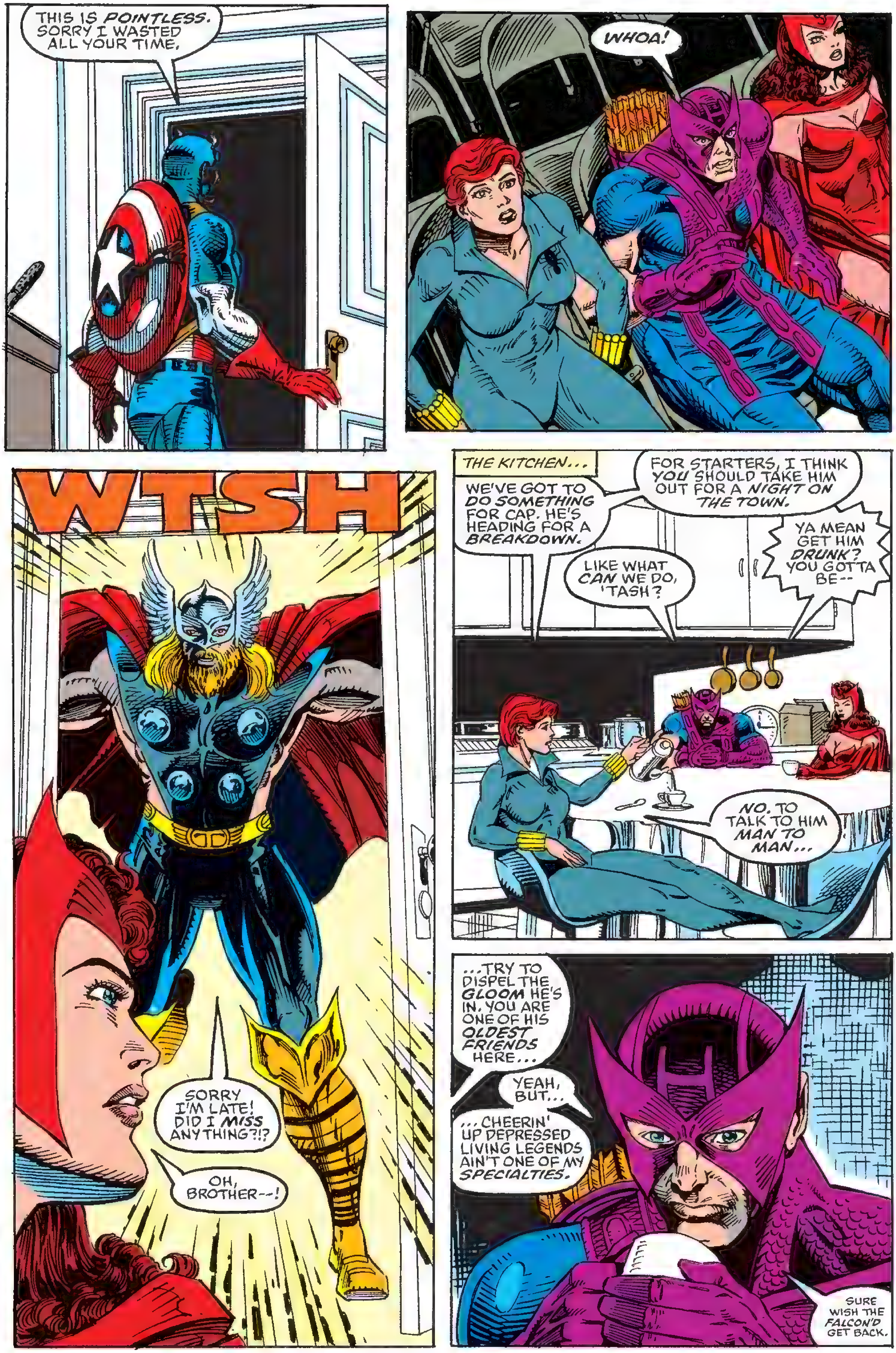

SAY, CAP... *WAIT UP!*
I DIDN'T WANT TO BRING IT UP BACK *THERE* AND WASTE *EVERYONE ELSE'S* TIME WITH IT, BUT... UH...
...I WAS THINKING OF TAKING A *LEAVE OF ABSENCE* FROM THE AVENGERS.
OH?
AS I TOLD YOU DURING MY *MEMBERSHIP INTERVIEW* WAY BACK WHEN, THE COSMIC ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR MY *QUANTUM-BANDS* APPOINTED ME "*PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE*"...
...AND WELL, I DON'T THINK I'VE BEEN DOING SUCH A *HOT JOB* LIVING UP TO THAT TITLE BY STAYING *EARTHBOUND* AS MUCH AS I HAVE.
WHO KNOWS? IF I'D FOUND A WAY TO BE A *BETTER PROTECTOR*, I MIGHT HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE *KREE-SHI'AR WAR* SOONER...
...AND BEEN ABLE TO SAVE SOME *LIVES.*
YOU'RE THINKING OF LEAVING IMMEDIATELY?
I REALIZE THIS IS *SHORT NOTICE*, BUT... I WANT TO CHECK IN ON THE *KREE EMPIRE*, SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR THE *SURVIVORS.*
I *DO* WANT TO ATTEND YOUR SEMINAR TONIGHT, THOUGH.
DON'T *WORRY* ABOUT IT. *YOU'RE* NOT ONE OF THE AVENGERS I FEEL NEEDS A LECTURE ON *ETHICS.*
THANKS.
YOU'LL BE A HARD MAN TO *REPLACE*, QUASAR, BUT THE KREE-- THE *UNIVERSE*-- UNDOUBTEDLY NEEDS YOU MORE THAN THE *AVENGERS* DO.
KEEP ME POSTED ON YOUR *ACTIVITIES*, YOU HEAR?
WILL *DO*, SIR.
AND WHENEVER YOU'RE IN THE VICINITY, YOU'LL ALWAYS BE WELCOME HERE. ONCE AN AVENGER...
THANKS... CAP. IT MEANS A *LOT* TO ME.
YOU'RE THE *GREATEST!*
YEAH. BUT THE GREATEST *WHAT?*

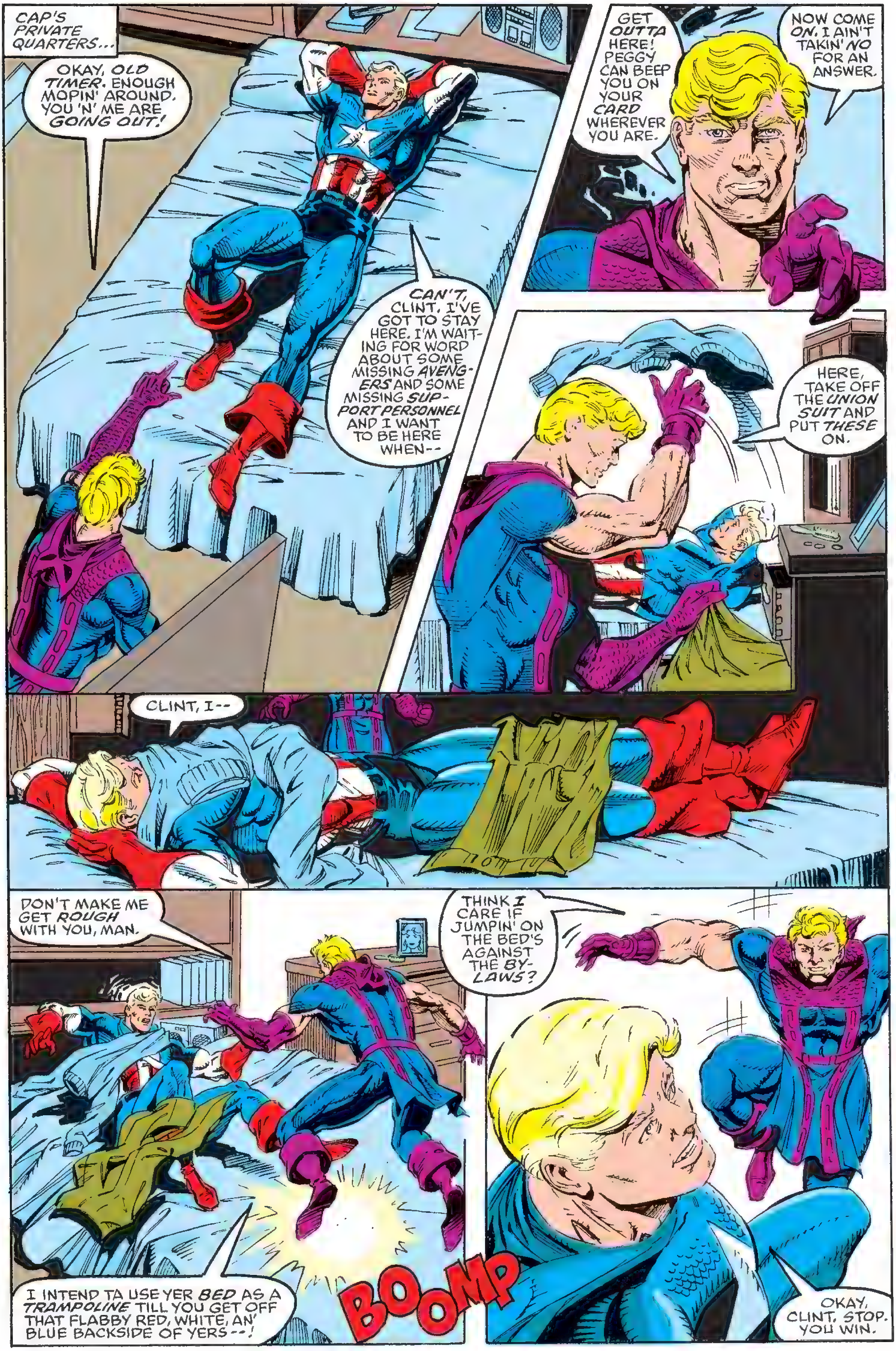

THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER...
CAP...?
OH, SO GOOD TO SEE YOU BACK! WERE YOU IN OUTER SPACE ALL THIS TIME? I WAS SO WORRIED...
AHEM.
SORRY.
YOU SHOULD SLAP ME WHEN I START ACTING LIKE A MOTHER HEN.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, PEGGY.
THE FALCON AND USAGENT WERE NOT AT THE DEBRIEFING. WHAT'S THEIR MISSION STATUS?
OH. WE RECEIVED A CALL THREE DAYS AGO FROM YOUR OLD ENEMY FLAG-SMASHER... IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH A FRIEND OF YOURS I NEVER MET--DEMOLITION-MAN... AND THEY WENT TO INVESTIGATE...
D-MAN?!?
PUT A TRACER ON THAT QUINJET AND CALL JOHN JAMESON--I WANT TO FOLLOW UP ON IT AT ONCE!
SORRY, STEVE, BUT YOUR PILOT HASN'T REPORTED IN SINCE YOU LEFT FOR SPACE. I THINK HE MAY BE OUT LOOKING FOR DIAMONDBACK.
YOU MEAN SHE--?
HAVEN'T HEARD A PEEP FROM HER IN ALMOST THREE WEEKS!
I GO AWAY AND THE WHOLE WORLD FALLS APART.
!

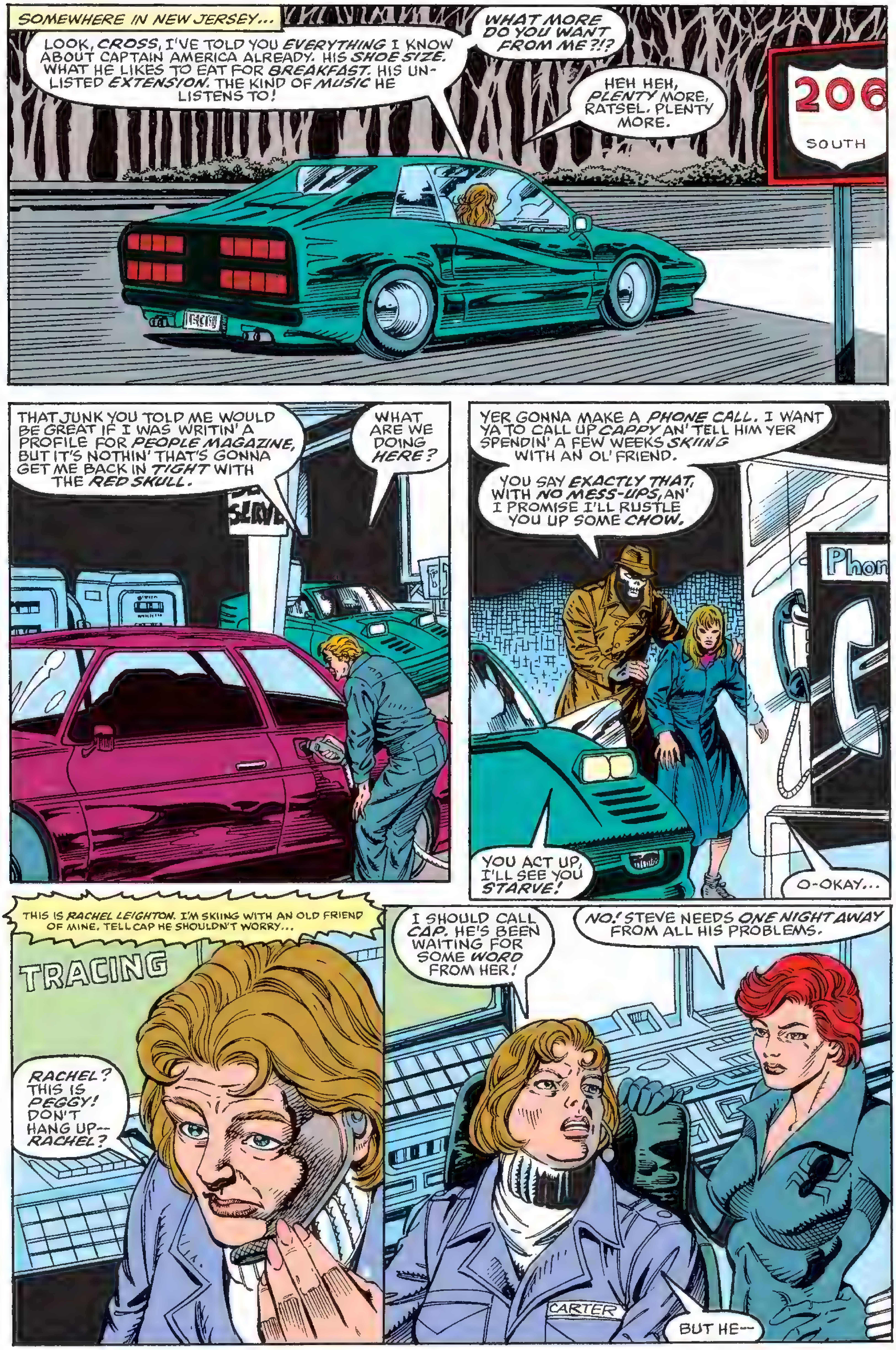

RIVERSIDE AVENUE, ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE OF MANHATTAN...
WHATSA MATTER, RATSEL? FOR WEEKS NOW, YOU'VE BEEN BEGGIN' ME TO LET YOU OUTTA OUR ABANDONED SUBWAY STATION HIDEAWAY--
--AN' NOW THAT I FINALLY GIVE IN TO YER WHININ', YER EMBARRASSIN' ME BY WALKIN' LIKE A FEEB!
YOU KNOW... VERY WELL WHY I'M TOO WEAK...TO WALK STRAIGHT, CROSSBONES!
I'M STARVING... YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN ME A DECENT MEAL...IN WEEKS.
YEAH, I GUESS I HAVE BEEN A LITTLE BIT STINGY IN THE GRUB DEPARTMENT. BUT YA GOTTA ADMIT, IT DID THE TRICK--
--TOOK THE FIGHTIN' SPIRIT RIGHT OUTTA --WHAT'D YOU USEDTA CALL YERSELF? DIAMONDBUTT?
ANYWAY, TOOTS, YOU 'N' ME ARE GOIN' ON A FIELD TRIP. I'M SICK O' THE BIG ROTTEN APPLE.
BKRASH
GIMME A SEC TO HOTWIRE THIS JALOPY.
VREEEEE
AHH...FEELS GREAT TO GO MOBILE, DON' IT?
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
I TOLD YOU, BABE. A FIELD TRIP.
I PROMISE YA--YOU'LL LIKE IT MUCH BETTER'N THE SUBWAY. I GOT A NICE PEACEFUL PLACE IN MIND FOR YA. REAL PEACEFUL. NO ONE AROUND BUT EARTHWORMS...
Y-YOU'RE GOING TO BURY ME ALIVE...?
MMMM...NOT EXACTLY.

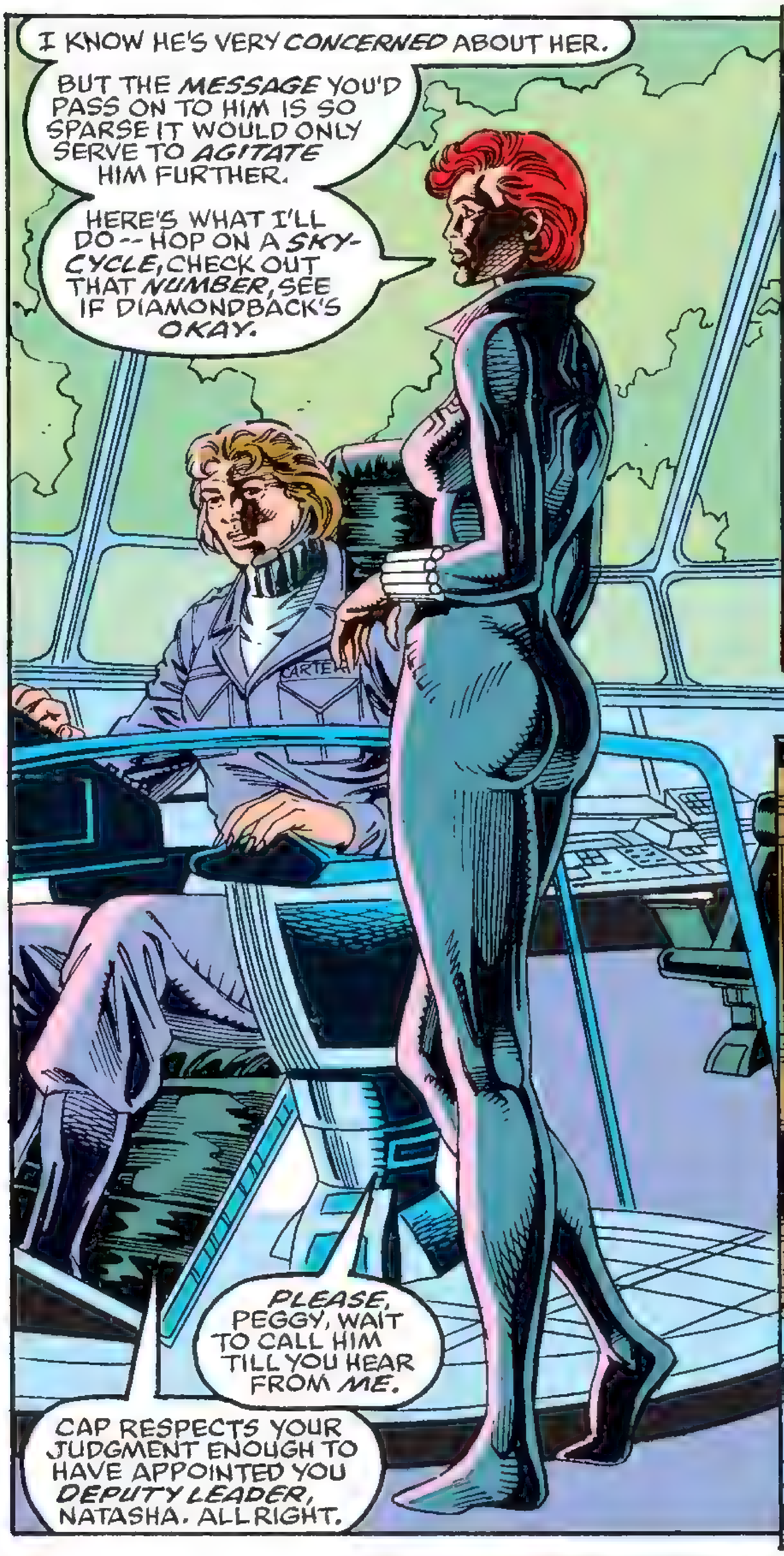

CAPTAIN AMERICA'S OFFICE, AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
ORGANIZATION'S A MESS. KEEP TRYING TO *STABILIZE* THE MEMBERSHIP, BUT IF IT'S NOT ONE THING IT'S ANOTHER...
RESERVES ARE PARTICULARLY IN SHAMBLES. *SPIDER-MAN* AND *NAMOR* DIDN'T RESPOND TO THE EMERGENCY SUMMONS AT THE ONSET OF "OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM"... GUESS I CAN'T COUNT ON THEM AS *BACK-UPS*...
WHO'S THAT LEAVE?
BEAST... INACT
HELLCAT... INACT
JOCASTA... DECEP
SHE-HULK... INACT
FALCON... INACT
SUB-MARINER... INAC
QUICKSILVER... INAC
ANT-MAN... INAC
RAGE... INAC
MOONDRAGON... INAC
OH, WHAT'S THE *USE?* MAYBE I SHOULD THROW IN THE *TOWEL.* MAYBE SOMEBODY WITH NEWER, FRESHER IDEAS COULD KEEP THIS *RAG-TAG GROUP* RUNNING BETTER THAN ME.
SEEMS LIKE *MY* STYLE OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR IS OUT OF *FASHION*, AT ODDS WITH THIS INCREASINGLY *VIOLENT SOCIETY.*
MAYBE GUYS LIKE THE *PUNISHER, CABLE*, AND *WOLVERINE* ARE THE *ANSWER* TO THE KINDS OF THREATS AMERICA FACES TODAY. MAYBE *BAD ATTITUDES* AND *LAX MORAL CODES* ARE THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE HEADWAY.
THE *VALUES* I'VE STRIVEN FOR MY ENTIRE CAREER SEEM SO... *UNTENABLE* IN THIS PRESENT CLIME. BUT WITHOUT THEM, WHAT *AM* I?
NOK NOK
YO, *CAP!* YOU *IN THERE?* IT'S ME. *HAWKEYE.* OR *GOLIATH.* OR JUST PLAIN *CLINT.* WHATEVER.
NEED SOME ADVICE DECIDING WHICH *COSTUMED IDENTITY* I SHOULD GO WITH.
CAPT. AMERICA
CAP?
NO ANSWER. HMH! PEGGY SAID HIS *COMPUTER* WAS ON LINE SO HE WAS PROBABLY *HERE.* GUESS HE LEFT IT ON AND SLIPPED *OUT.*

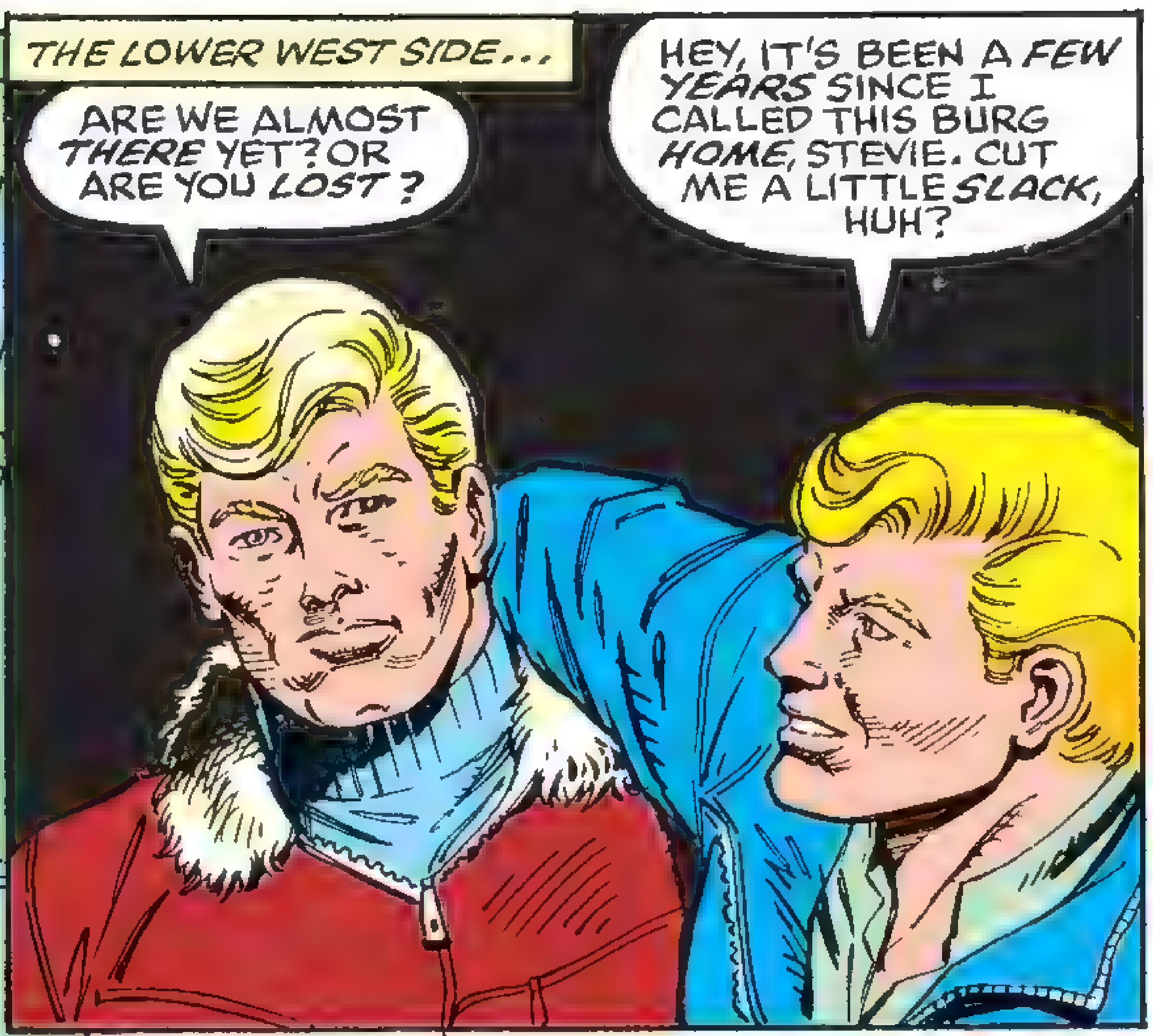

THAT EVENING...
--NEVER SEEN STEVE SO TENSE, WITHDRAWN. I ASKED HIM TO WORK OUT WITH ME, AND HE TURNED ME DOWN FLAT.
YOU AT LEAST GOT HIM TO SPEAK TO YOU. I THINK HE'S BEEN AVOIDING ME ALL DAY.
I HOPE SOME OF THE OTHERS SHOW UP SOON. STEVE IS GOING TO BE AWFULLY DISAPPOINTED WHEN HE SEES THIS POOR TURN OUT FOR HIS SEMINAR.
YEAH, WELL, A LOT OF THE GUYS HAD TO-- UH-OH. HERE HE COMES.
UH, WONDY, IRON MAN, AND MOST OF THE WEST COAST CREW HAD TO GET BACK TO THEIR BUSINESS, AND UH, TOLD ME TO GIVE YOU THEIR REGRETS.
HERCULES AND THE KNIGHT WENT TO FLY GILGAMESH BACK TO EUROPE... CRYSTAL'S WITH HER BABY... THE VISION'S LOOKING INTO GETTING HIS SKIN FIXED...
I GET THE PICTURE, NATASHA. YOU THREE ARE IT.
THE ONES WHO REALLY NEED TO HEAR THIS AREN'T HERE.
HMM.

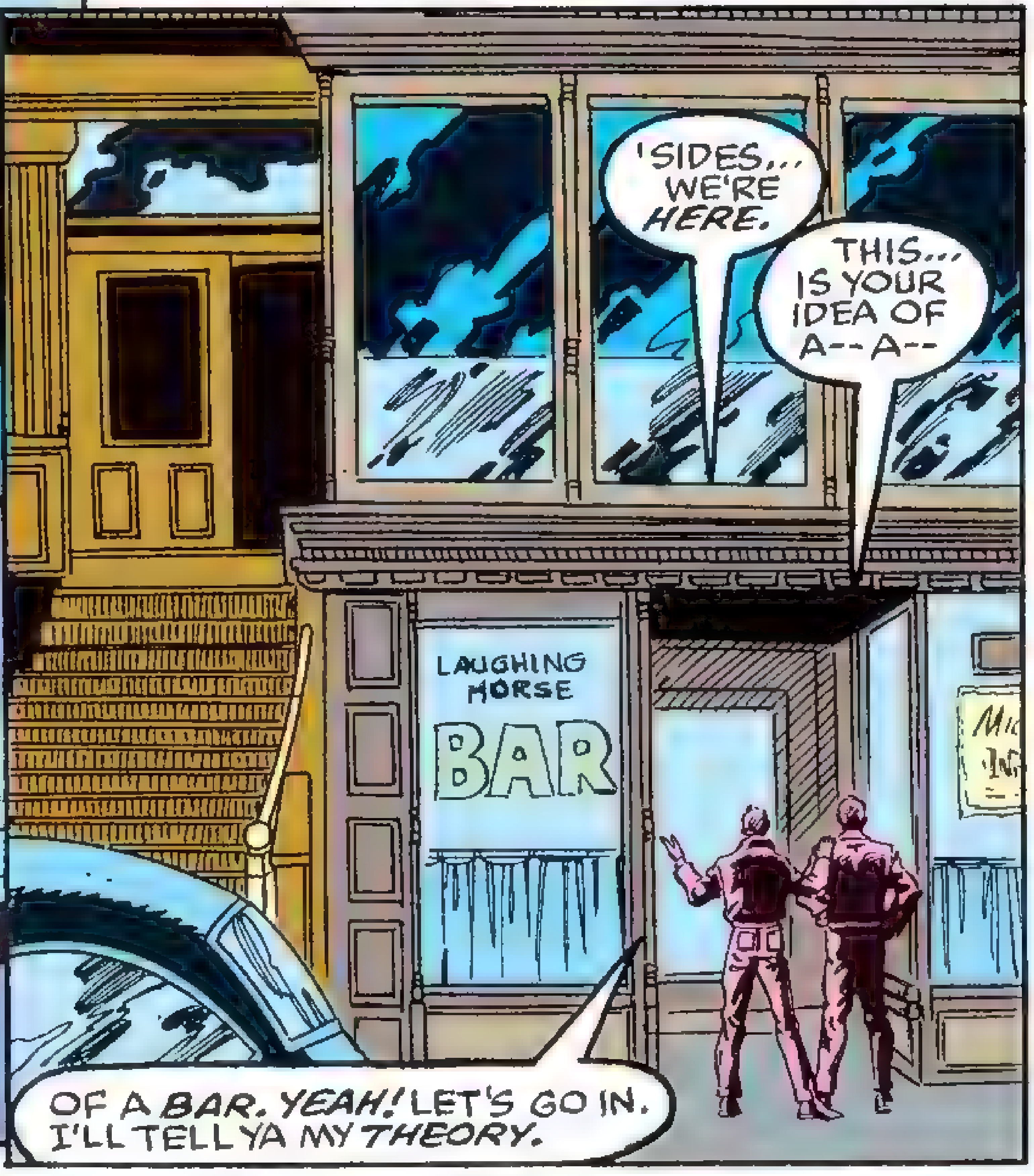

THIS IS *POINTLESS*. SORRY I WASTED ALL YOUR TIME.
WHOA!
WTSH
SORRY I'M LATE! DID I *MISS* ANYTHING?!?
OH, BROTHER--!
THE KITCHEN...
WE'VE GOT TO *DO SOMETHING* FOR CAP. HE'S HEADING FOR A *BREAKDOWN.*
LIKE WHAT *CAN* WE DO, 'TASH?
FOR STARTERS, I THINK *YOU* SHOULD TAKE HIM OUT FOR A *NIGHT ON THE TOWN.*
YA MEAN GET HIM *DRUNK?* YOU GOTTA BE--
NO. TO TALK TO HIM *MAN TO MAN...*
...TRY TO DISPEL THE *GLOOM* HE'S IN. YOU ARE ONE OF HIS *OLDEST FRIENDS* HERE...
YEAH, BUT...
...CHEERIN' UP DEPRESSED LIVING LEGENDS AIN'T ONE OF MY *SPECIALTIES.*
SURE WISH THE *FALCON'D* GET BACK.

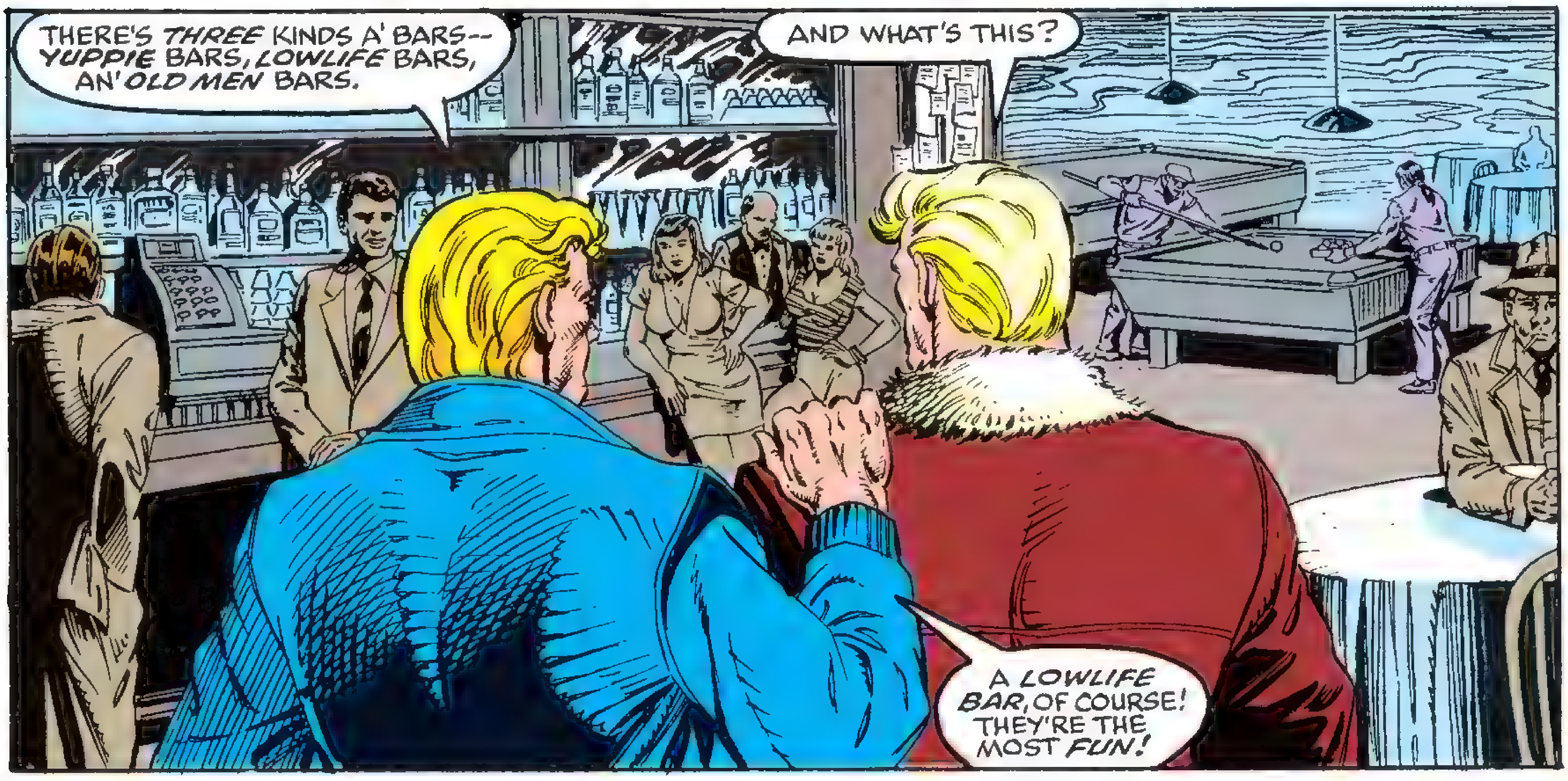

CAP'S PRIVATE QUARTERS...
OKAY, OLD TIMER. ENOUGH MOPIN' AROUND. YOU 'N' ME ARE GOING OUT!
CAN'T, CLINT. I'VE GOT TO STAY HERE. I'M WAITING FOR WORD ABOUT SOME MISSING AVENGERS AND SOME MISSING SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND I WANT TO BE HERE WHEN--
GET OUTTA HERE! PEGGY CAN BEEP YOU ON YOUR CARD WHEREVER YOU ARE.
NOW COME ON. I AIN'T TAKIN' NO FOR AN ANSWER.
HERE, TAKE OFF THE UNION SUIT AND PUT THESE ON.
CLINT, I--
DON'T MAKE ME GET ROUGH WITH YOU, MAN.
I INTEND TA USE YER BED AS A TRAMPOLINE TILL YOU GET OFF THAT FLABBY RED, WHITE, AN' BLUE BACKSIDE OF YERS--!
BOOMP
THINK I CARE IF JUMPIN' ON THE BED'S AGAINST THE BY-LAWS?
OKAY, CLINT. STOP. YOU WIN.

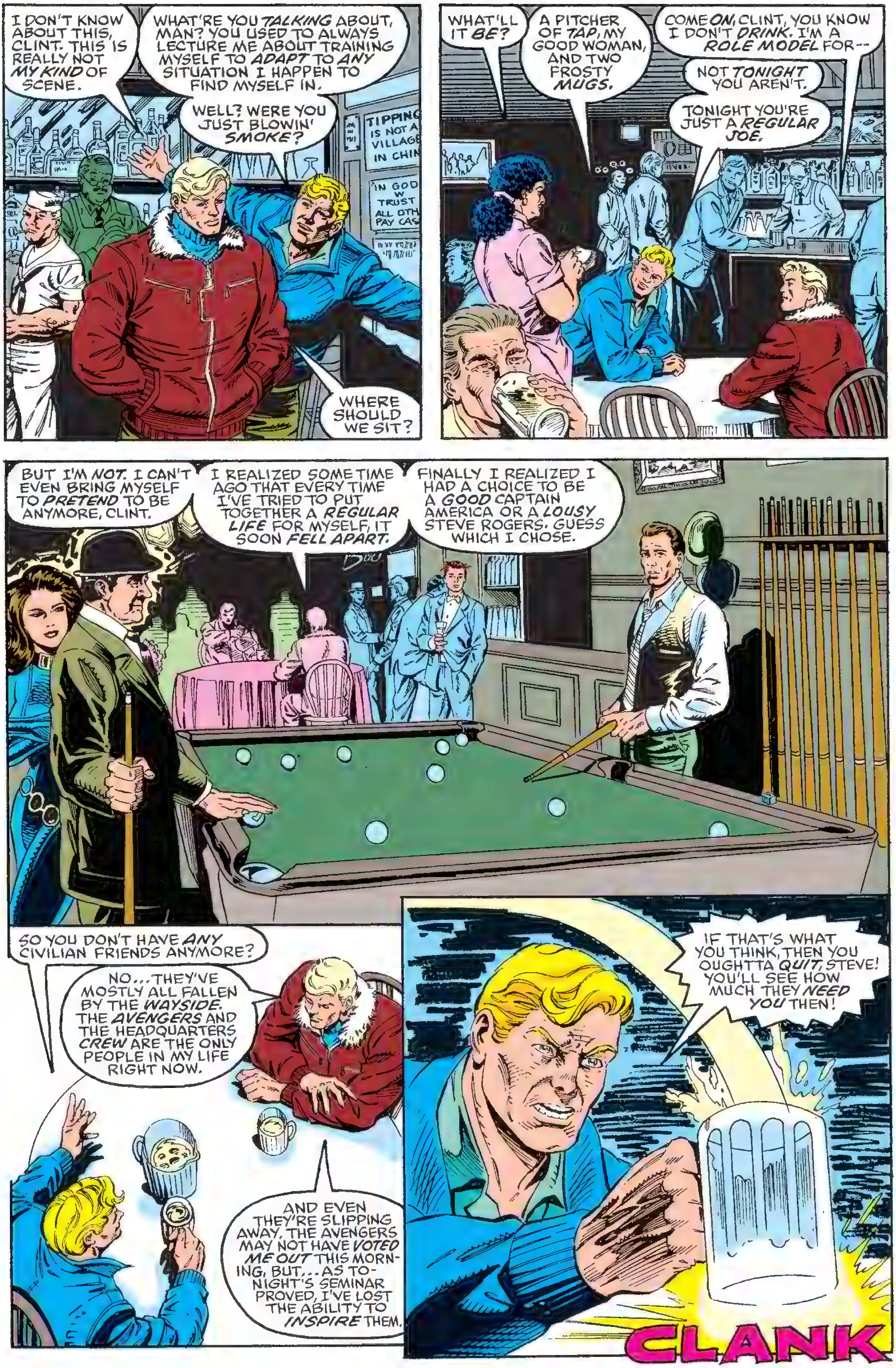

SOMEWHERE IN NEW JERSEY...
LOOK, CROSS, I'VE TOLD YOU EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA ALREADY. HIS SHOE SIZE. WHAT HE LIKES TO EAT FOR BREAKFAST. HIS UNLISTED EXTENSION. THE KIND OF MUSIC HE LISTENS TO!
WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!?
HEH HEH, PLENTY MORE, RATSEL. PLENTY MORE.
206
SOUTH
THAT JUNK YOU TOLD ME WOULD BE GREAT IF I WAS WRITIN' A PROFILE FOR PEOPLE MAGAZINE, BUT IT'S NOTHIN' THAT'S GONNA GET ME BACK IN TIGHT WITH THE RED SKULL.
WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?
SERVE
YER GONNA MAKE A PHONE CALL. I WANT YA TO CALL UP CAPPY AN' TELL HIM YER SPENDIN' A FEW WEEKS SKIING WITH AN OL' FRIEND.
YOU SAY EXACTLY THAT, WITH NO MESS-UPS, AN' I PROMISE I'LL RUSTLE YOU UP SOME CHOW.
Phon
YOU ACT UP, I'LL SEE YOU STARVE!
O-OKAY...
THIS IS RACHEL LEIGHTON. I'M SKIING WITH AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE. TELL CAP HE SHOULDN'T WORRY...
TRACING
RACHEL? THIS IS PEGGY! DON'T HANG UP-- RACHEL?
I SHOULD CALL CAP. HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR SOME WORD FROM HER!
NO! STEVE NEEDS ONE NIGHT AWAY FROM ALL HIS PROBLEMS.
CARTER
BUT HE--

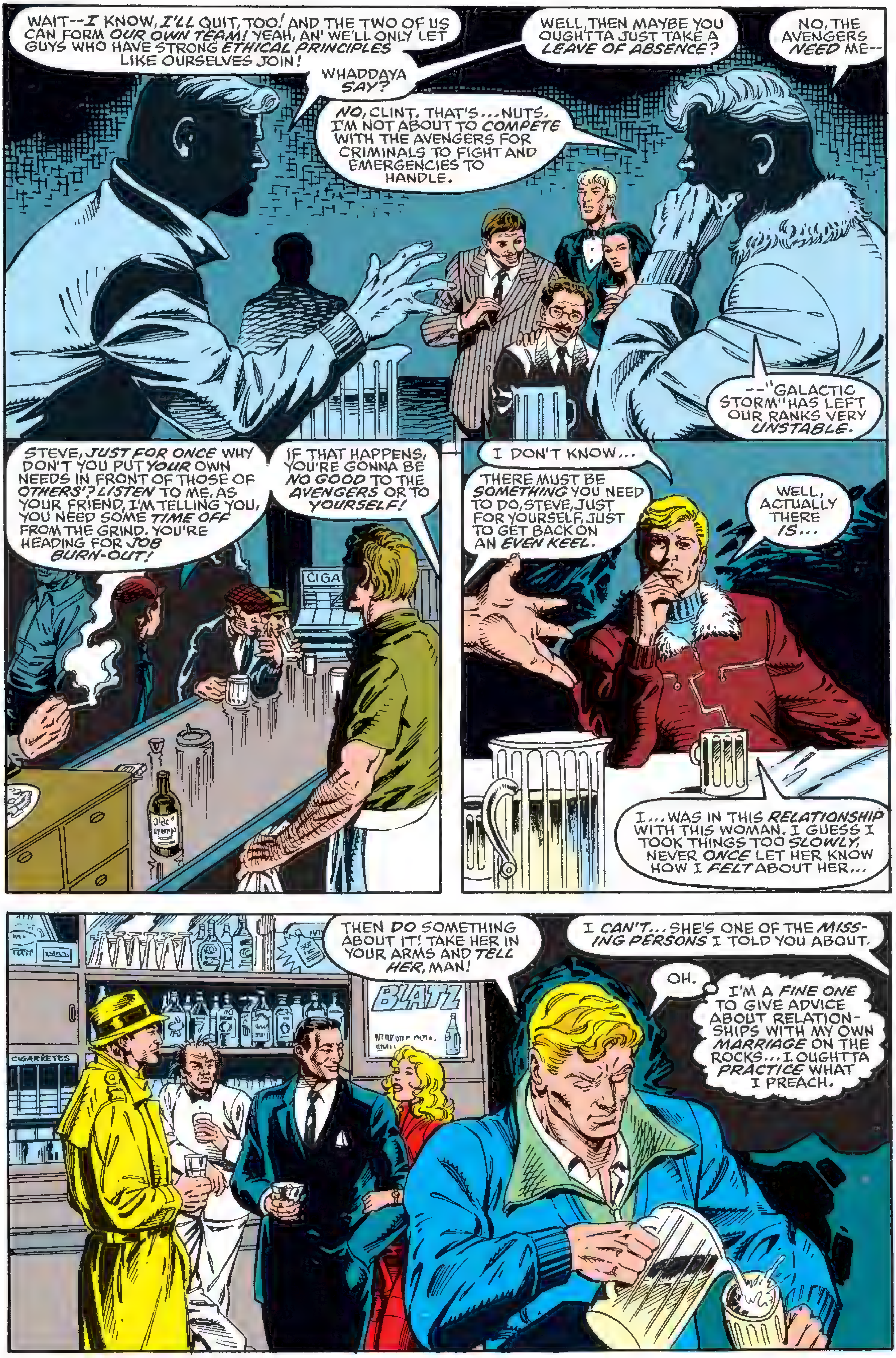

I KNOW HE'S VERY *CONCERNED* ABOUT HER.
BUT THE *MESSAGE* YOU'D PASS ON TO HIM IS SO SPARSE IT WOULD ONLY SERVE TO *AGITATE* HIM FURTHER.
HERE'S WHAT I'LL DO-- HOP ON A *SKY-CYCLE*, CHECK OUT THAT *NUMBER*, SEE IF DIAMONDBACK'S *OKAY*.
CARTER
PLEASE, PEGGY, WAIT TO CALL HIM TILL YOU HEAR FROM *ME*.
CAP RESPECTS YOUR JUDGMENT ENOUGH TO HAVE APPOINTED YOU *DEPUTY LEADER*, NATASHA. ALL RIGHT.

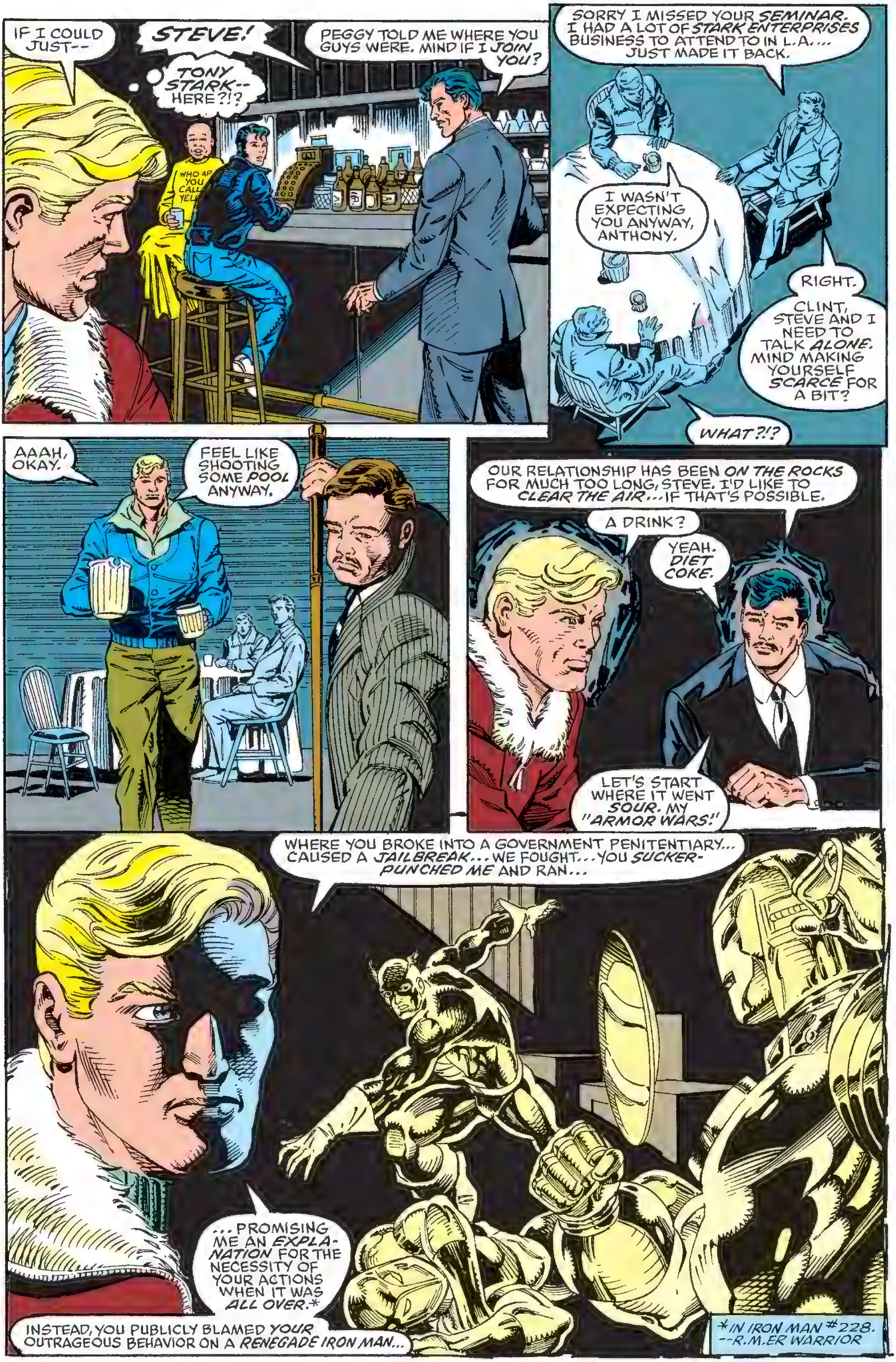

THE LOWER WEST SIDE...
ARE WE ALMOST *THERE* YET? OR ARE YOU *LOST*?
HEY, IT'S BEEN A *FEW YEARS* SINCE I CALLED THIS BURG *HOME*, STEVIE. CUT ME A LITTLE *SLACK*, HUH?

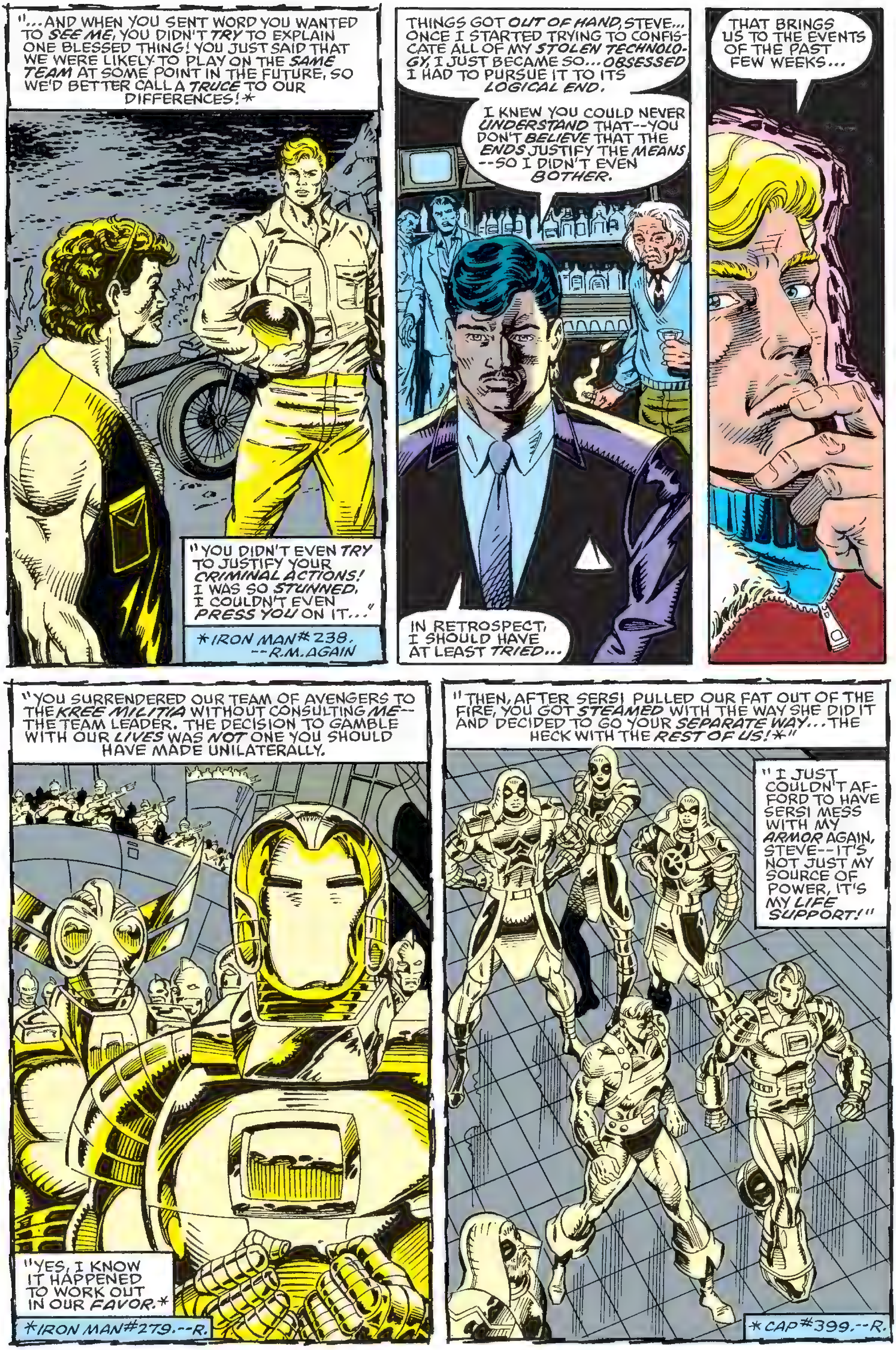

'SIDES... WE'RE *HERE*.
THIS... IS YOUR IDEA OF A-- A--
LAUGHING HORSE BAR
OF A *BAR*. *YEAH!* LET'S GO IN. I'LL TELL YA MY *THEORY*.

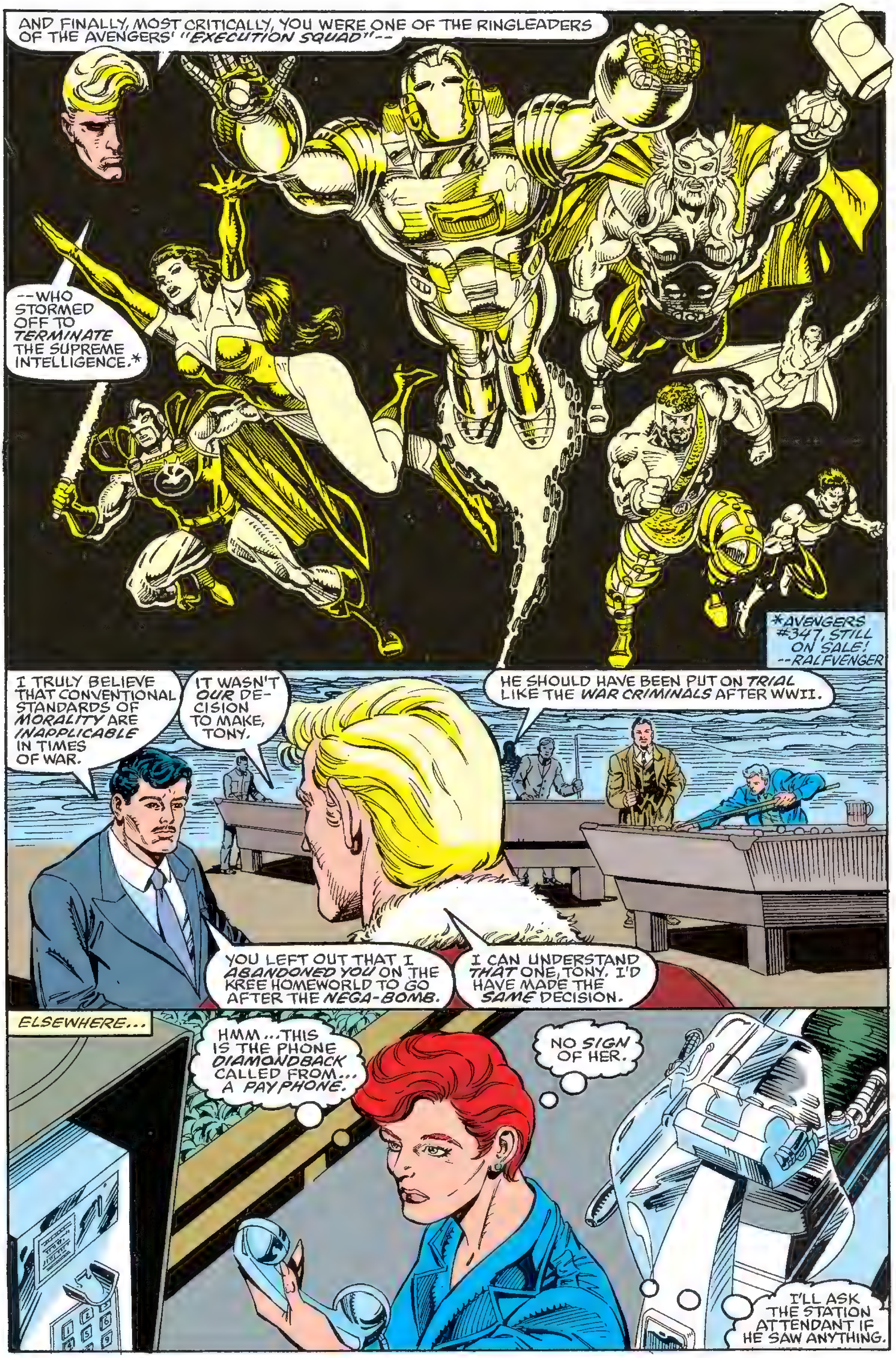

THERE'S *THREE* KINDS A' BARS-- *YUPPIE* BARS, *LOWLIFE* BARS, AN' *OLD MEN* BARS.
AND WHAT'S THIS?
A *LOWLIFE BAR*, OF COURSE! THEY'RE THE MOST *FUN*!

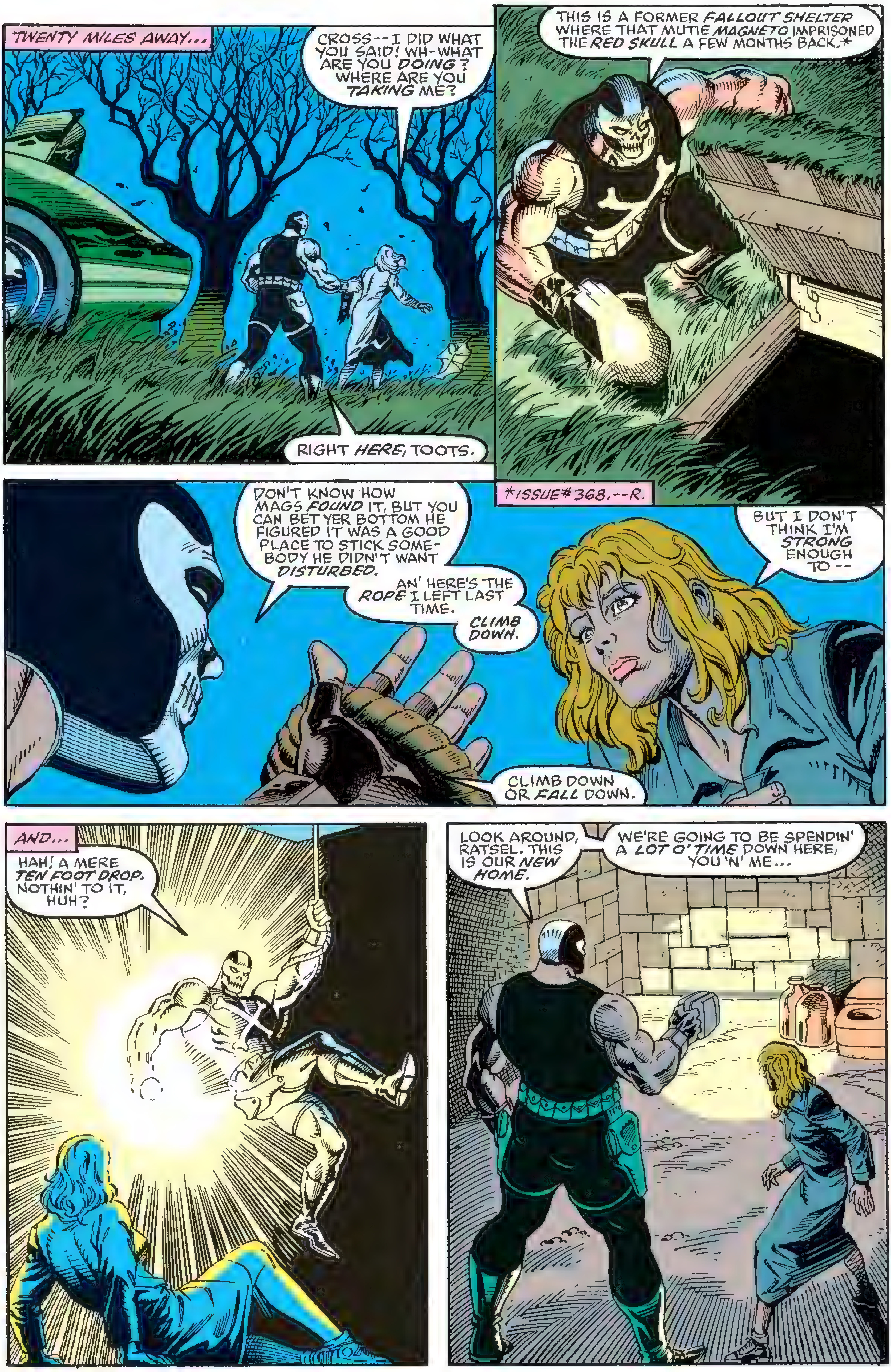

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS, CLINT. THIS IS REALLY NOT *MY KIND* OF SCENE.
WHAT'RE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT, MAN? YOU USED TO ALWAYS LECTURE ME ABOUT TRAINING MYSELF TO *ADAPT* TO *ANY* SITUATION I HAPPEN TO FIND MYSELF IN.
WELL? WERE YOU JUST BLOWIN' *SMOKE?*
TIPPING IS NOT A VILLAG IN CHIN
IN GOD W TRUST ALL OTH PAY CAS
WHERE SHOULD WE SIT?
WHAT'LL IT *BE?*
A PITCHER OF *TAP*, MY GOOD WOMAN, AND TWO FROSTY *MUGS.*
COME *ON*, CLINT, YOU KNOW I DON'T *DRINK*. I'M A *ROLE MODEL* FOR--
NOT *TONIGHT* YOU AREN'T.
TONIGHT YOU'RE JUST A *REGULAR JOE.*
BUT I'M *NOT*. I CAN'T EVEN BRING MYSELF TO *PRETEND* TO BE ANYMORE, CLINT.
I REALIZED SOME TIME AGO THAT EVERY TIME I'VE TRIED TO PUT TOGETHER A *REGULAR LIFE* FOR MYSELF, IT SOON *FELL APART.*
FINALLY I REALIZED I HAD A CHOICE TO BE A *GOOD* CAPTAIN AMERICA OR A *LOUSY* STEVE ROGERS. GUESS WHICH I CHOSE.
SO YOU DON'T HAVE *ANY* CIVILIAN FRIENDS ANYMORE?
NO... THEY'VE MOSTLY ALL FALLEN BY THE *WAYSIDE.* THE *AVENGERS* AND THE HEADQUARTERS *CREW* ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE IN MY LIFE RIGHT NOW.
AND EVEN THEY'RE SLIPPING AWAY. THE AVENGERS MAY NOT HAVE *VOTED ME OUT* THIS MORNING, BUT... AS TONIGHT'S SEMINAR PROVED, I'VE LOST THE ABILITY TO *INSPIRE* THEM.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, THEN YOU OUGHTTA *QUIT*, STEVE! YOU'LL SEE HOW MUCH THEY *NEED YOU* THEN!
CLANK

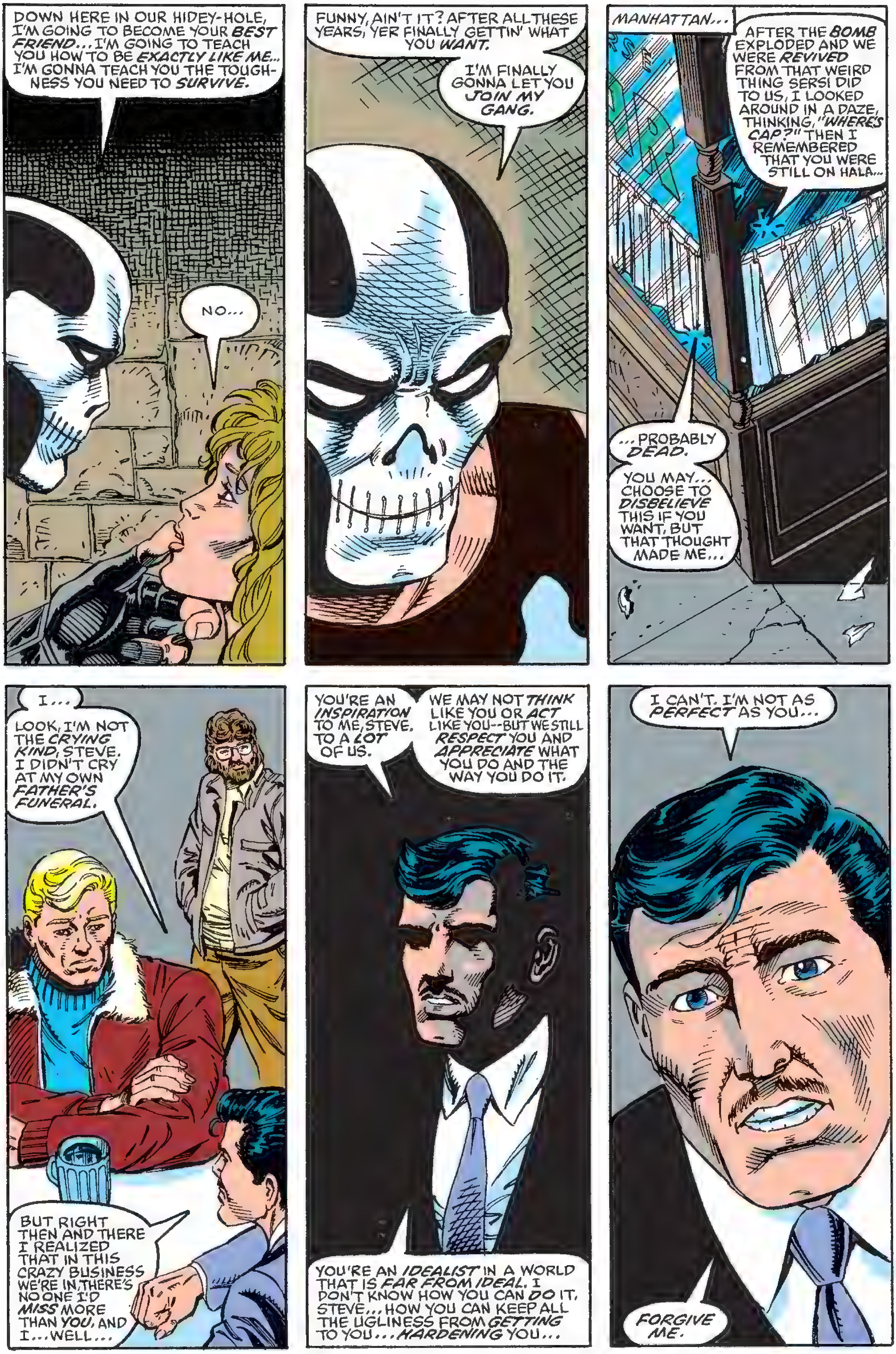

WAIT--I KNOW, I'LL QUIT, TOO! AND THE TWO OF US CAN FORM OUR OWN TEAM! YEAH, AN' WE'LL ONLY LET GUYS WHO HAVE STRONG ETHICAL PRINCIPLES LIKE OURSELVES JOIN!
WHADDAYA SAY?
NO, CLINT. THAT'S... NUTS. I'M NOT ABOUT TO COMPETE WITH THE AVENGERS FOR CRIMINALS TO FIGHT AND EMERGENCIES TO HANDLE.
WELL, THEN MAYBE YOU OUGHTTA JUST TAKE A LEAVE OF ABSENCE?
NO, THE AVENGERS NEED ME--
--"GALACTIC STORM" HAS LEFT OUR RANKS VERY UNSTABLE.
STEVE, JUST FOR ONCE WHY DON'T YOU PUT YOUR OWN NEEDS IN FRONT OF THOSE OF OTHERS'? LISTEN TO ME, AS YOUR FRIEND, I'M TELLING YOU, YOU NEED SOME TIME OFF FROM THE GRIND. YOU'RE HEADING FOR JOB BURN-OUT!
IF THAT HAPPENS, YOU'RE GONNA BE NO GOOD TO THE AVENGERS OR TO YOURSELF!
CIGA
I DON'T KNOW...
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING YOU NEED TO DO, STEVE, JUST FOR YOURSELF, JUST TO GET BACK ON AN EVEN KEEL.
WELL, ACTUALLY THERE IS...
I... WAS IN THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS WOMAN. I GUESS I TOOK THINGS TOO SLOWLY, NEVER ONCE LET HER KNOW HOW I FELT ABOUT HER...
THEN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! TAKE HER IN YOUR ARMS AND TELL HER, MAN!
I CAN'T... SHE'S ONE OF THE MISSING PERSONS I TOLD YOU ABOUT.
OH.
I'M A FINE ONE TO GIVE ADVICE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS WITH MY OWN MARRIAGE ON THE ROCKS... I OUGHTTA PRACTICE WHAT I PREACH.
BLATZ
CIGARETTES

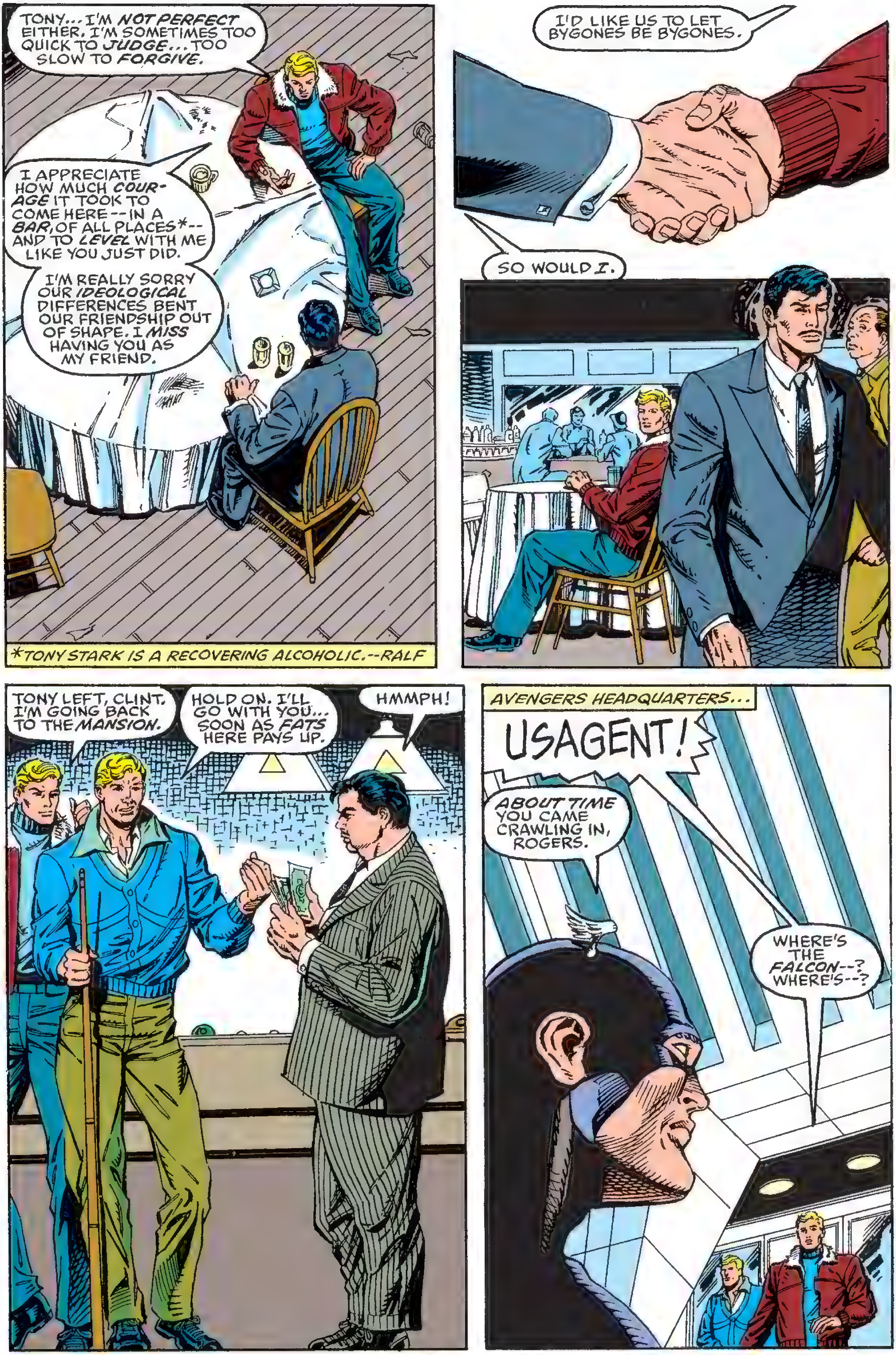

IF I COULD JUST--
STEVE!
TONY STARK-- HERE?!?
WHO AR YOU CALL YEL
PEGGY TOLD ME WHERE YOU GUYS WERE. MIND IF I JOIN YOU?
SORRY I MISSED YOUR SEMINAR. I HAD A LOT OF STARK ENTERPRISES BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO IN L.A.... JUST MADE IT BACK.
I WASN'T EXPECTING YOU ANYWAY, ANTHONY.
RIGHT.
CLINT, STEVE AND I NEED TO TALK ALONE. MIND MAKING YOURSELF SCARCE FOR A BIT?
WHAT?!?
AAAH, OKAY.
FEEL LIKE SHOOTING SOME POOL ANYWAY.
OUR RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN ON THE ROCKS FOR MUCH TOO LONG, STEVE. I'D LIKE TO CLEAR THE AIR... IF THAT'S POSSIBLE.
A DRINK?
YEAH. DIET COKE.
LET'S START WHERE IT WENT SOUR. MY "ARMOR WARS!"
WHERE YOU BROKE INTO A GOVERNMENT PENITENTIARY... CAUSED A JAILBREAK... WE FOUGHT... YOU SUCKER-PUNCHED ME AND RAN...
...PROMISING ME AN EXPLANATION FOR THE NECESSITY OF YOUR ACTIONS WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER.*
INSTEAD, YOU PUBLICLY BLAMED YOUR OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIOR ON A RENEGADE IRON MAN...
*IN IRON MAN #228. --R.M.ER WARRIOR

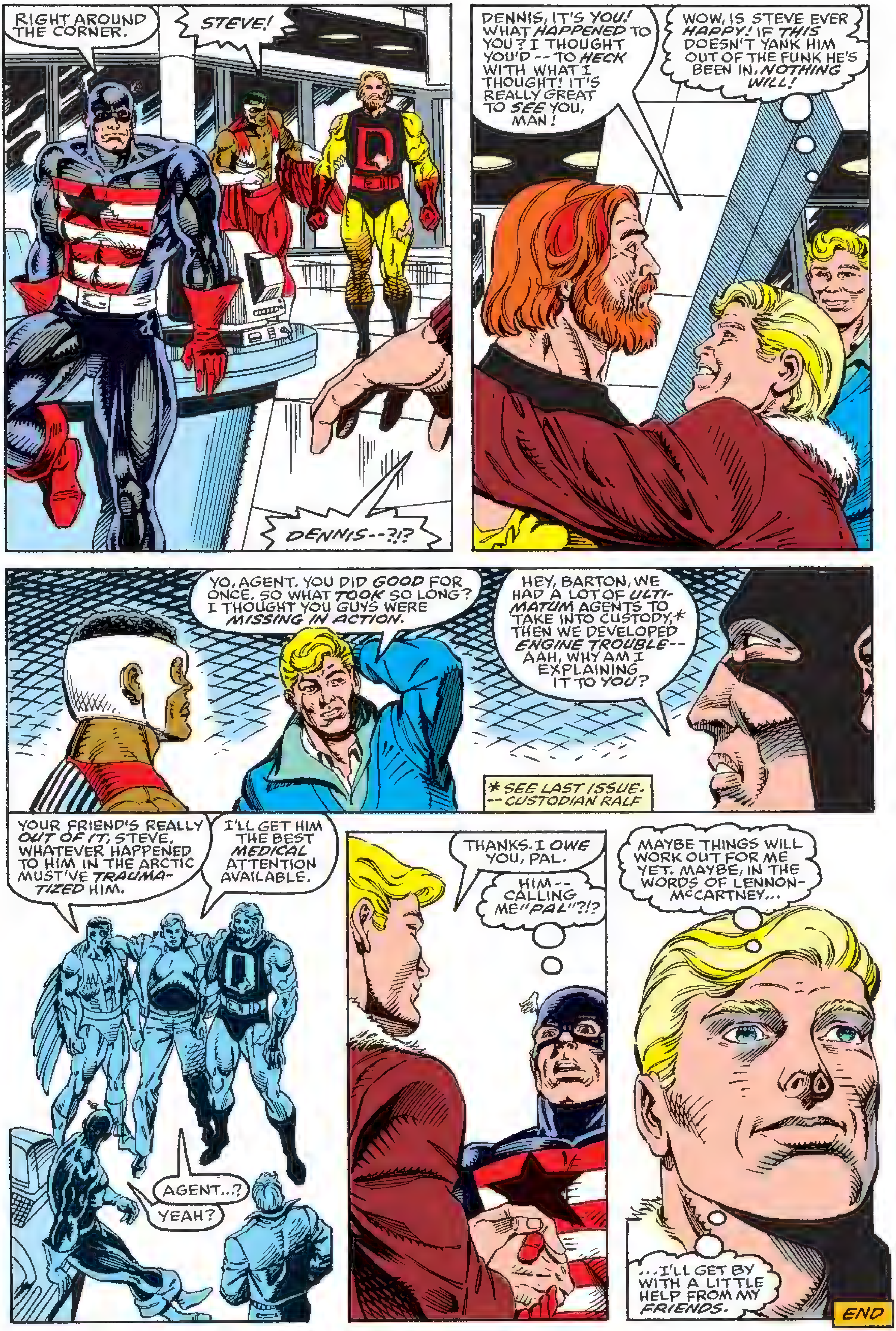

"...AND WHEN YOU SENT WORD YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, YOU DIDN'T TRY TO EXPLAIN ONE BLESSED THING! YOU JUST SAID THAT WE WERE LIKELY TO PLAY ON THE SAME TEAM AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE, SO WE'D BETTER CALL A TRUCE TO OUR DIFFERENCES!*
"YOU DIDN'T EVEN TRY TO JUSTIFY YOUR CRIMINAL ACTIONS! I WAS SO STUNNED, I COULDN'T EVEN PRESS YOU ON IT..."
*IRON MAN #238. --R.M. AGAIN
THINGS GOT OUT OF HAND, STEVE... ONCE I STARTED TRYING TO CONFISCATE ALL OF MY STOLEN TECHNOLOGY, I JUST BECAME SO... OBSESSED I HAD TO PURSUE IT TO ITS LOGICAL END.
I KNEW YOU COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND THAT--YOU DON'T BELIEVE THAT THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS --SO I DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER.
IN RETROSPECT, I SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST TRIED...
THAT BRINGS US TO THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS...
"YOU SURRENDERED OUR TEAM OF AVENGERS TO THE KREE MILITIA WITHOUT CONSULTING ME-- THE TEAM LEADER. THE DECISION TO GAMBLE WITH OUR LIVES WAS NOT ONE YOU SHOULD HAVE MADE UNILATERALLY.
"YES, I KNOW IT HAPPENED TO WORK OUT IN OUR FAVOR.*
*IRON MAN #279.--R.
"THEN, AFTER SERSI PULLED OUR FAT OUT OF THE FIRE, YOU GOT STEAMED WITH THE WAY SHE DID IT AND DECIDED TO GO YOUR SEPARATE WAY... THE HECK WITH THE REST OF US!*"
"I JUST COULDN'T AFFORD TO HAVE SERSI MESS WITH MY ARMOR AGAIN, STEVE--IT'S NOT JUST MY SOURCE OF POWER, IT'S MY LIFE SUPPORT!"
*CAP #399.--R.


AND FINALLY, MOST CRITICALLY, YOU WERE ONE OF THE RINGLEADERS OF THE AVENGERS' *"EXECUTION SQUAD"*--
--WHO STORMED OFF TO *TERMINATE* THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE.*
**AVENGERS #347, STILL ON SALE! --RALFVENGER*
I TRULY BELIEVE THAT CONVENTIONAL STANDARDS OF *MORALITY* ARE *INAPPLICABLE* IN TIMES OF WAR.
IT WASN'T *OUR* DECISION TO MAKE, TONY.
HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN PUT ON *TRIAL* LIKE THE *WAR CRIMINALS* AFTER WWII.
YOU LEFT OUT THAT I *ABANDONED YOU* ON THE KREE HOMEWORLD TO GO AFTER THE *NEGA-BOMB*.
I CAN UNDERSTAND *THAT* ONE, TONY. I'D HAVE MADE THE *SAME* DECISION.
ELSEWHERE...
HMM...THIS IS THE PHONE *DIAMONDBACK* CALLED FROM... A *PAY PHONE*.
NO *SIGN* OF HER.
I'LL ASK THE STATION ATTENDANT IF HE SAW ANYTHING.

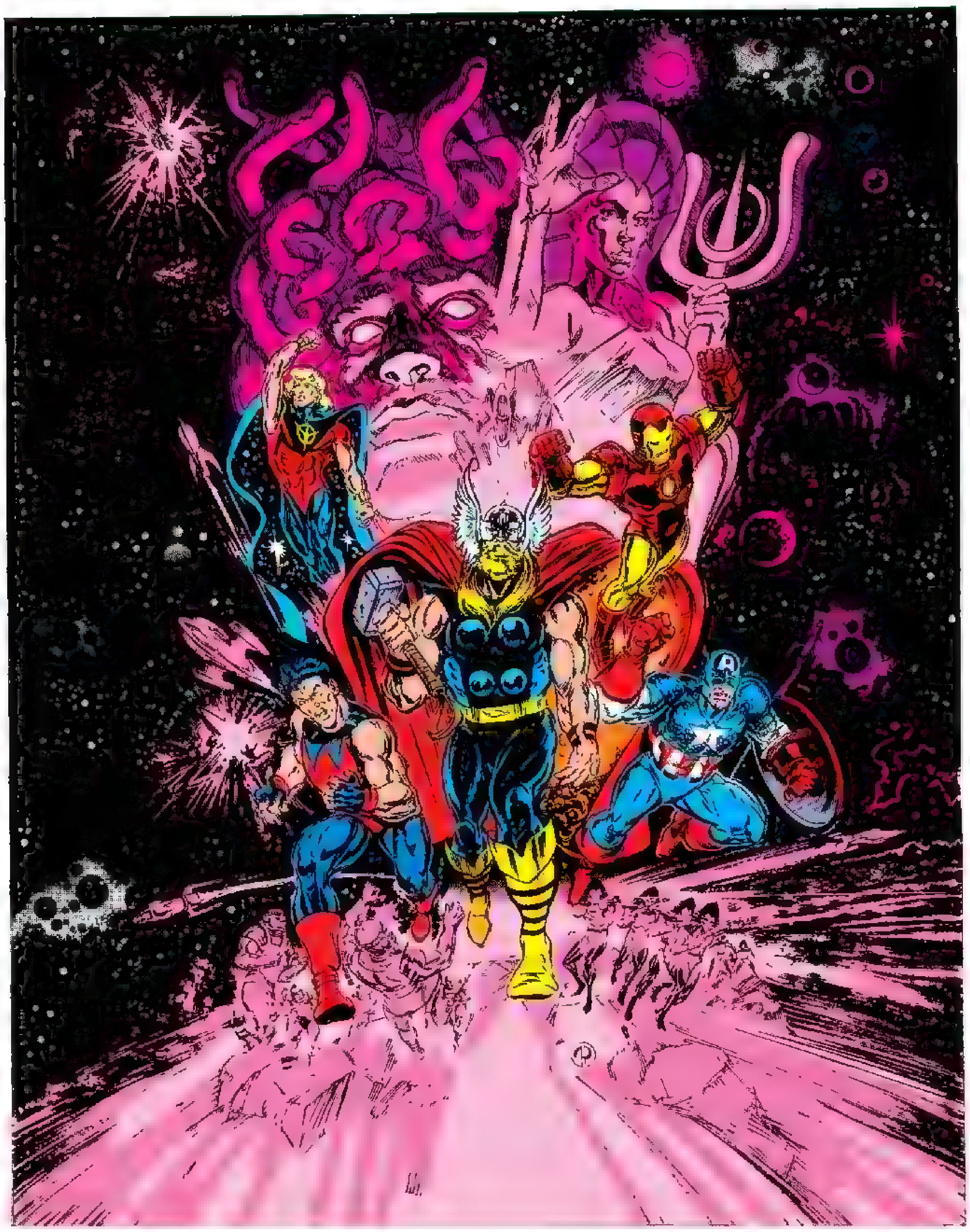

TWENTY MILES AWAY...
CROSS--I DID WHAT YOU SAID! WH-WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*? WHERE ARE YOU *TAKING* ME?
RIGHT *HERE*, TOOTS.
THIS IS A FORMER *FALLOUT SHELTER* WHERE THAT MUTIE *MAGNETO* IMPRISONED THE *RED SKULL* A FEW MONTHS BACK.*
*ISSUE #368.--R.
DON'T KNOW HOW MAGS *FOUND* IT, BUT YOU CAN BET YER BOTTOM HE FIGURED IT WAS A GOOD PLACE TO STICK SOMEBODY HE DIDN'T WANT *DISTURBED*.
AN' HERE'S THE *ROPE* I LEFT LAST TIME.
CLIMB DOWN.
BUT I DON'T THINK I'M *STRONG* ENOUGH TO --
CLIMB DOWN OR *FALL* DOWN.
AND...
HAH! A MERE *TEN FOOT DROP*. NOTHIN' TO IT, HUH?
LOOK AROUND, RATSEL. THIS IS OUR *NEW HOME*.
WE'RE GOING TO BE SPENDIN' A *LOT O' TIME* DOWN HERE, YOU 'N' ME...


DOWN HERE IN OUR HIDEY-HOLE, I'M GOING TO BECOME YOUR *BEST FRIEND*... I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU HOW TO BE *EXACTLY LIKE ME*... I'M GONNA TEACH YOU THE TOUGHNESS YOU NEED TO *SURVIVE*.
NO...
FUNNY, AIN'T IT? AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YER FINALLY GETTIN' WHAT YOU *WANT*.
I'M FINALLY GONNA LET YOU *JOIN MY GANG*.
MANHATTAN...
AFTER THE *BOMB* EXPLODED AND WE WERE *REVIVED* FROM THAT WEIRD THING SERSI DID TO US, I LOOKED AROUND IN A DAZE, THINKING, *"WHERE'S CAP?"* THEN I REMEMBERED THAT YOU WERE STILL ON HALA...
...PROBABLY *DEAD*.
YOU MAY... CHOOSE TO *DISBELIEVE* THIS IF YOU WANT, BUT THAT THOUGHT MADE ME...
I...
LOOK, I'M NOT THE *CRYING KIND*, STEVE. I DIDN'T CRY AT MY OWN *FATHER'S FUNERAL*.
BUT RIGHT THEN AND THERE I REALIZED THAT IN THIS CRAZY BUSINESS WE'RE IN, THERE'S NO ONE I'D *MISS* MORE THAN *YOU*, AND I... WELL...
YOU'RE AN *INSPIRATION* TO ME, STEVE. TO A *LOT* OF US.
WE MAY NOT *THINK* LIKE YOU OR *ACT* LIKE YOU--BUT WE STILL *RESPECT* YOU AND *APPRECIATE* WHAT YOU DO AND THE WAY YOU DO IT.
YOU'RE AN *IDEALIST* IN A WORLD THAT IS *FAR FROM IDEAL*. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAN *DO* IT, STEVE... HOW YOU CAN KEEP ALL THE UGLINESS FROM *GETTING* TO YOU... *HARDENING* YOU...
I CAN'T. I'M NOT AS *PERFECT* AS YOU...
FORGIVE ME.


TONY... I'M *NOT PERFECT* EITHER. I'M SOMETIMES TOO QUICK TO *JUDGE*... TOO SLOW TO *FORGIVE.*
I APPRECIATE HOW MUCH *COURAGE* IT TOOK TO COME HERE--IN A *BAR*, OF ALL PLACES*-- AND TO *LEVEL* WITH ME LIKE YOU JUST DID.
I'M REALLY SORRY OUR *IDEOLOGICAL* DIFFERENCES BENT OUR FRIENDSHIP OUT OF SHAPE. I *MISS* HAVING YOU AS MY FRIEND.
*TONY STARK IS A RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC.--RALF
I'D LIKE US TO LET BYGONES BE BYGONES.
SO WOULD *I*.
TONY LEFT, CLINT. I'M GOING BACK TO THE *MANSION.*
HOLD ON. I'LL GO WITH YOU... SOON AS *FATS* HERE PAYS UP.
HMMPH!
AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
USAGENT!
ABOUT TIME YOU CAME CRAWLING IN, ROGERS.
WHERE'S THE *FALCON*--? WHERE'S--?


RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER.
STEVE!
DENNIS--?!?
DENNIS, IT'S *YOU!* WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU? I THOUGHT YOU'D -- TO *HECK* WITH WHAT I THOUGHT! IT'S REALLY GREAT TO *SEE* YOU, MAN!
WOW, IS STEVE EVER *HAPPY!* IF *THIS* DOESN'T YANK HIM OUT OF THE FUNK HE'S BEEN IN, *NOTHING WILL!*
YO, AGENT. YOU DID *GOOD* FOR ONCE. SO WHAT *TOOK* SO LONG? I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WERE *MISSING IN ACTION.*
HEY, BARTON, WE HAD A LOT OF *ULTIMATUM* AGENTS TO TAKE INTO CUSTODY,* THEN WE DEVELOPED *ENGINE TROUBLE*-- AAH, WHY AM I EXPLAINING IT TO *YOU?*
*SEE LAST ISSUE. --CUSTODIAN RALF
YOUR FRIEND'S REALLY *OUT OF IT,* STEVE. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HIM IN THE ARCTIC MUST'VE *TRAUMATIZED* HIM.
I'LL GET HIM THE BEST *MEDICAL* ATTENTION AVAILABLE.
AGENT...?
YEAH?
THANKS. I *OWE* YOU, PAL.
HIM-- CALLING ME "*PAL*"?!?
MAYBE THINGS WILL WORK OUT FOR ME YET. MAYBE, IN THE WORDS OF LENNON-McCARTNEY...
...I'LL GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY *FRIENDS.*
END

ORCHESTRATING CHAOS: DEVELOPING OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM



Two civilizations, separated by the infinite expanse of the cosmos, put into motion the events that may result in the eradication of each other. A third plays the role of interloper, helping to foment war between the two. The fourth, an innocent in this high drama, faces its ultimate destruction because of this intergalactic power play.

This scenario provides the backdrop for what's been heralded as the most elborate super heroes at war-in-space epic ever attempted in comics history — OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM, THE KREE-SHI-AR WAR.

The mammoth crossover extravaganza can be followed in the pages of seven regular Marvel titles — AVENGERS WEST COAST, IRON MAN, CAPTAIN AMERICA, WONDER MAN, THOR, THE AVENGERS and QUASAR. OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM kicks off in January, 1992 in CAPTAIN AMERICA #398 and runs nineteen parts — reaching a bone-jarring conclusion in THE AVENGERS #347.

The action picks up with Shi'ar ruler, Princess Lilandra, thirsting to exact revenge on the military aggressions of the Kree. Her plan is to construct and activate a deadly bomb on her enemies, rendering them leaderless and in chaos. The Kree, however, have their own plans for further aggression. Representatives from both galaxies journey to the Earth-bound tomb of Marvell to complete their respective plans, but in doing so cause tremendous disruptions in the normal activity of the Earth's sun when they pass through stargates to and from the Earth.

Enter the Avengers forces to figure out what's going on and put an end to the calamitous situation threatening the Sun and therefore, the planet Earth. The action takes to the outer reaches of the universe as the Skrulls also get involved — doing some rather dirty work to add to the war that's brewing. It comes down to the combined might of the Avengers against the three feuding cultures — a deadly, suicidal mission.

The storyline, laced with plenty of fist-pounding action, intrigue and twists, is highlighted by a revealing look at the Avengers members. Bitter divisions over the game plan it should pursue for this desperate undertaking cause rifts within the Avengers family and lead to a disturbing scrutiny of its policies and power structure.

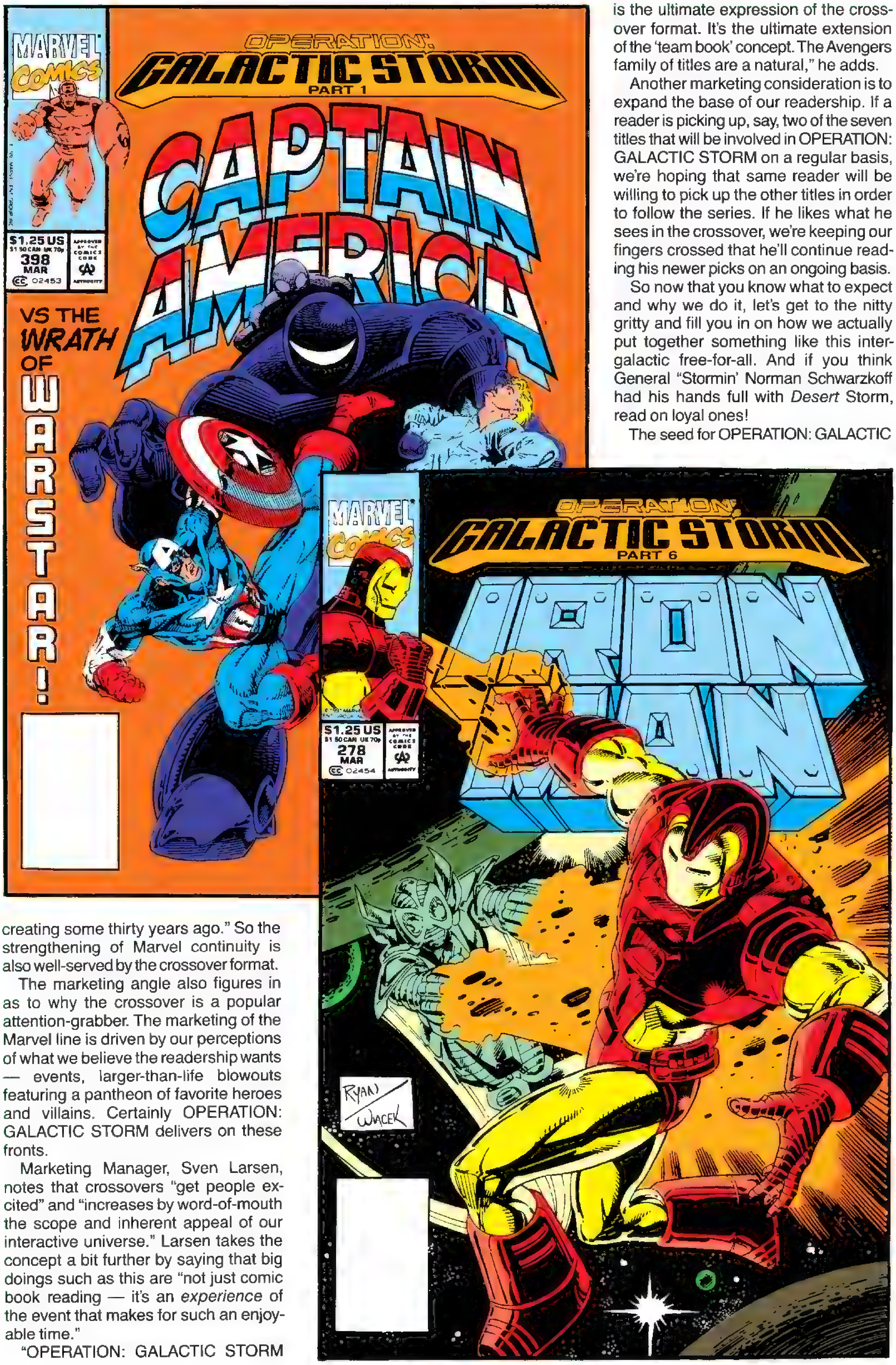
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM, as noted before, is the most ambitious space adventure crossover series ever undertaken. But Marvel is certainly no newcomer to the crossover genre, having recently chalked up successes with INFINITY GAUNTLET, INFERNO, ACTS OF VENGEANCE and SECRET WARS II. In fact, in recent years, Marvel annuals have been handled in a similar "family" crossover approach.

An obvious question that pops up is "why take on this chore which involves months of planning and coordination as does OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM? The question can be answered by looking at both the creative and marketing aspects of the Marvel approach.

From a creative standpoint, crossovers afford the writers and artists of the series an opportunity to work with new storylines. Paul Ryan, whose work in OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM will be seen in the pages of IRON MAN, remembers fondly his work on the ACTS OF VENGEANCE series, noting that "it was lots of fun — I had a chance to pencil some major villains that normally didn't appear in my regular series." Bob Harras, THE AVENGERS writer, cites this as "not only a chance to work with *characters* I usually don't, but because of the massive coordination required, to work with artists and editors I normally wouldn't."

Crossovers also feature characters that would otherwise not appear together. Super heroes and villains, whose appearances are often limited to a specific title or a small group of titles, now have a reason for reaching beyond these limitations. Once again, this gives the creators a further opportunity to develop and explore characterizations and dynamics which otherwise might not be addressed.

Roy Thomas, writer of AVENGERS WEST COAST, brings up another reason for doing crossovers, "Major events like this enable us a chance to tidy up the Marvel Universe, to show it as the coherent form it is. It's a further opportunity to validate this Universe we started


MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM PART 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA
$1.25 US $1.50 CAN UK 70p 398 MAR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
VS THE WRATH OF WARSTAR!
MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM PART 6
IRON MAN
$1.25 US $1.50 CAN UK 70p 278 MAR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
RYAN WIACEK

creating some thirty years ago." So the strengthening of Marvel continuity is also well-served by the crossover format.

The marketing angle also figures in as to why the crossover is a popular attention-grabber. The marketing of the Marvel line is driven by our perceptions of what we believe the readership wants — events, larger-than-life blowouts featuring a pantheon of favorite heroes and villains. Certainly OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM delivers on these fronts.

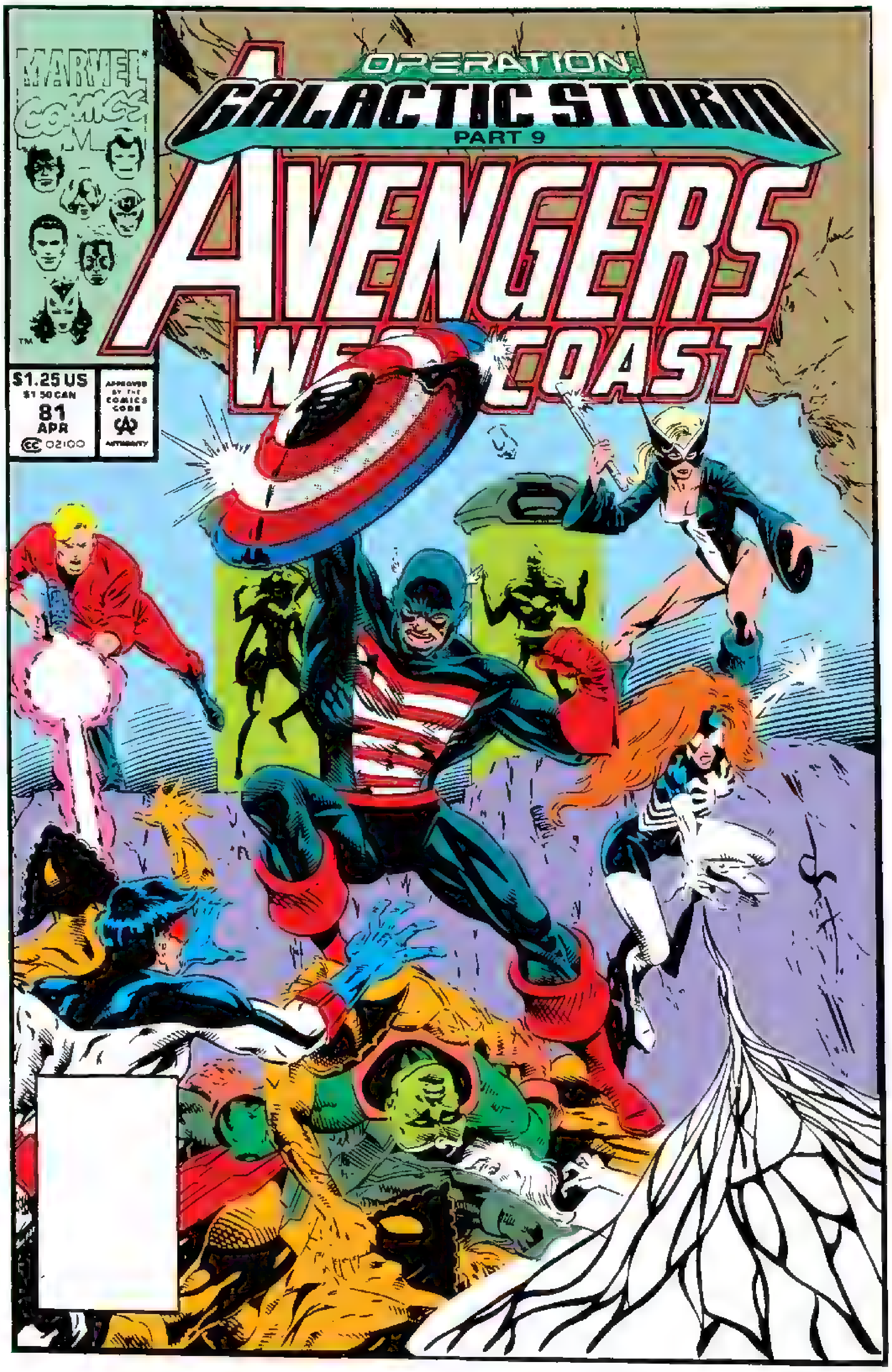
Marketing Manager, Sven Larsen, notes that crossovers "get people excited" and "increases by word-of-mouth the scope and inherent appeal of our interactive universe." Larsen takes the concept a bit further by saying that big doings such as this are "not just comic book reading — it's an *experience* of the event that makes for such an enjoyable time."

"OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM is the ultimate expression of the crossover format. It's the ultimate extension of the 'team book' concept. The Avengers family of titles are a natural," he adds.

Another marketing consideration is to expand the base of our readership. If a reader is picking up, say, two of the seven titles that will be involved in OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM on a regular basis, we're hoping that same reader will be willing to pick up the other titles in order to follow the series. If he likes what he sees in the crossover, we're keeping our fingers crossed that he'll continue reading his newer picks on an ongoing basis.

So now that you know what to expect and why we do it, let's get to the nitty gritty and fill you in on how we actually put together something like this intergalactic free-for-all. And if you think General "Stormin' Norman Schwarzkoff had his hands full with *Desert* Storm, read on loyal ones!

The seed for OPERATION: GALACTIC


MARVEL COMICS
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM
PART 9
AVENGERS
WEST COAST
$1.25 US
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81
APR
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STORM was sown at a meeting of head honchos from the editorial, sales and promotion departments. Once it was decided what titles the crossover was to affect, editorial picked up the ball and began the grueling process of hammering out the concept. The storyline for OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM was the brainchild of Executive Editor Mark Gruenwald.

A sketchy outline was then presented to the editors of the various titles — Ralph Macchio (AVENGERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA and THOR), Fabian Nicieza (WONDER MAN), Kelly Corvese (QUASAR) and me, Nel Yomtov (IRON MAN and AVENGERS WEST COAST). We all had comments and suggestions and presented them to Mark at a general meeting. Gruenwald then huddled with writer/editors Harras and Nicieza and together the three undertook the unenviable task of planning out the events which are to take place in each of the nineteen parts of the series. Their revised outline was circulated and followed by a full-scale and final meeting of all writers and editors at a one day retreat far from the maddening pace of the Marvel offices. Last minute changes in the story were made. Production is to begin.

Meanwhile, a name for the series was carefully chosen by editorial, sales and promo personnel and a design for the logo commissioned — letterer extraordinaire Ken Lopez's final rendition appears at the head of this article.

While editorial was hammering out its part, sales and promo were going full tilt on their respective fronts. Point-of-purchase materials and detailed storyline synopses were developed in order to get the word out to distributors and retailers. By the way, expect to see posters, header cards and deluxe Kree-Shi'ar "draft cards" at your local retailers when the series hits the stores!

The logistics of keeping the project going are awe-inspiring. Four editors must coordinate the work of about thirty creators — writers, pencilers, inkers, letterers and colorists. An immense amount of attention to detail goes into the work: storyline, continuity, character costumes and coloring must be carefully cross-referenced and maintained throughout the months of production.

Bob Harras calls the task "daunting" and notes that as a writer he "must carefully avoid the obvious problems that go along with writing characters with which he's not experienced." For Harras, these many weeks of preparation mean a lot of extra reading and phone time to make certain he's right on target with his plots and scripts.

Because each part of the crossover is carefully orchestrated to follow and then lead into another part, timing is critical. Creators and editors know that the publishing schedule will be unforgiving — there is no room for falling behind it.

And if this juggling act isn't enough, keep in mind that the regular non-OPERATION GALACTIC STORM storylines and sub-plots which have been running in these seven titles must still be addressed while our heroes are out on this slugfest in space. Whew!

That's it. We've crafted this tale with an epic storyline, powerful heroes and villains and a slam-bang conclusion. Each part of the series is designed to add a significant piece to the entire mosaic. Worth the effort? We think so, but as always, you folks are going to be the final judges. Check it out and let us know what you think.

— *Nel Yomtov*

Here's a bonus checklist for all you STORM watchers:

Part 1	CAPTAIN AMERICA #398 (ships 1/2)
Part 2	AVENGERS WEST COAST #80 (ships 1/2)
Part 3	QUASAR #32 (ships 1/9)
Part 4	WONDER MAN #7 (ships 1/9)
Part 5	AVENGERS #345 (ships 1/6)
Part 6	IRON MAN #278 (ships 1/23)
Part 7	THOR #445 (ships 1/23)
Part 8	CAPTAIN AMERICA #399 (ships 2/6)
Part 9	AVENGERS WEST COAST #81 (ships 2/6)
Part 10	QUASAR #33 (ships 2/13)
Part 11	WONDER MAN #8 (ships 2/13)
Part 12	AVENGERS #346 (ships 2/20)
Part 13	IRON MAN #279 (ships 2/27)
Part 14	THOR #446 (ships 2/27)
Part 15	CAPTAIN AMERICA #400 (ships 3/6)
Part 16	AVENGERS WEST COAST #82 (ships 3/6)
Part 17	QUASAR #34 (ships 3/13)
Part 18	WONDER MAN #9 (ships 3/13)
Part 19	AVENGERS #347 (ships 3/20)

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

AVENGERS
AVENGERS WEST COAST
THOR
IRON MAN
CAPTAIN AMERICA
QUASAR
WONDER MAN

With the waning of the Skrull Empire, The Kree and The Shi'Ar have become the two most powerful galactic empires in the universe. Now, for the first time, these two superpowers will come head-to-head.

Operation: Galactic Storm, a three-month, seven-series epic saga crossing all of the major Avengers-related titles, chronicles the war that breaks out as the Kree and the Shi'Ar launch simultaneous military assaults upon each other, even as the Supreme Intelligence makes a bid to regain control of the Kree and save his race from an evolutionary dead-end.

When a stargate is established near the Earth's sun, for use by both military forces, it will be up to The Avengers to launch their own major assault team in a mission to save our planet. Frequent use of the stargate is threatening to cause our sun to explode.

And this stargate will be used, both to transport troops and to move the Shi'Ar ace-in-the-hole, the Nega-Bomb, intended to destroy the Kree homeworld of Hala!

Since the defense of Earth will require powerful forces on three fronts, it will involve the largest and most powerful gathering of Avengers ever attempted. There will be four major groups of super beings involved in the conflict:

The Avengers: A force comprised of all members of the East and West Coast teams, their alternates and many of the reservists.

The Imperial Guard: The Shi'Ar elite force, fiercely loyal to the Empress, led by Gladiator.

The Starjammers: The swashbuckling interplanetary rogues, led by Corsair and now a part of the Shi'Ar force under the rule of Empress Lilandra.

The Kree Starforce: A group of seven, incredibly powerful beings gathered by the Supreme Intelligence to fight on the side of the Kree.

The events will take place in all of the major Avengers titles in January, February and March, with the continuity taking place as follows:

January: CAPTAIN AMERICA #398 (ships 1/2)
AVENGERS WEST COAST #80 (ships 1/2)
QUASAR #32 (ships 1/9)
WONDER MAN #7 (ships 1/9)
AVENGERS #345 (ships 1/16)
IRON MAN #278 (ships 1/23)
THOR #445 (ships 1/23)

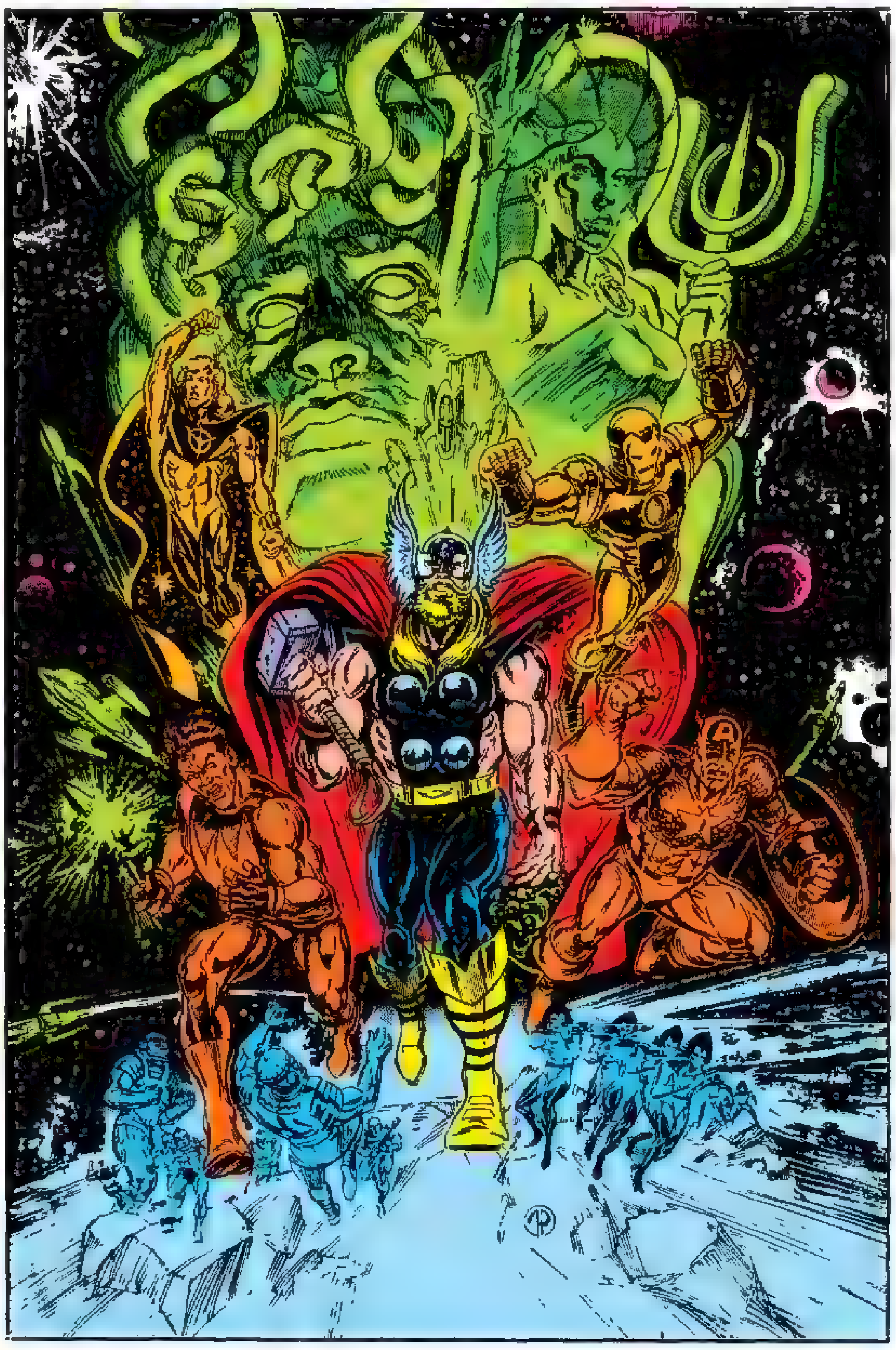
February: CAPTAIN AMERICA #399 (ships 2/6)
AVENGERS WEST COAST #81 (ships 2/6)
QUASAR #33 (ships 2/13)
WONDER MAN #8 (ships 2/13)
AVENGERS #346 (ships 2/20)
IRON MAN #279 (ships 2/27)
THOR #446 (ships 2/27)

March: CAPTAIN AMERICA #400 (ships 3/6)
AVENGERS WEST COAST #82 (ships 3/6)
QUASAR #34 (ships 3/13)
WONDER MAN #9 (ships 3/13)

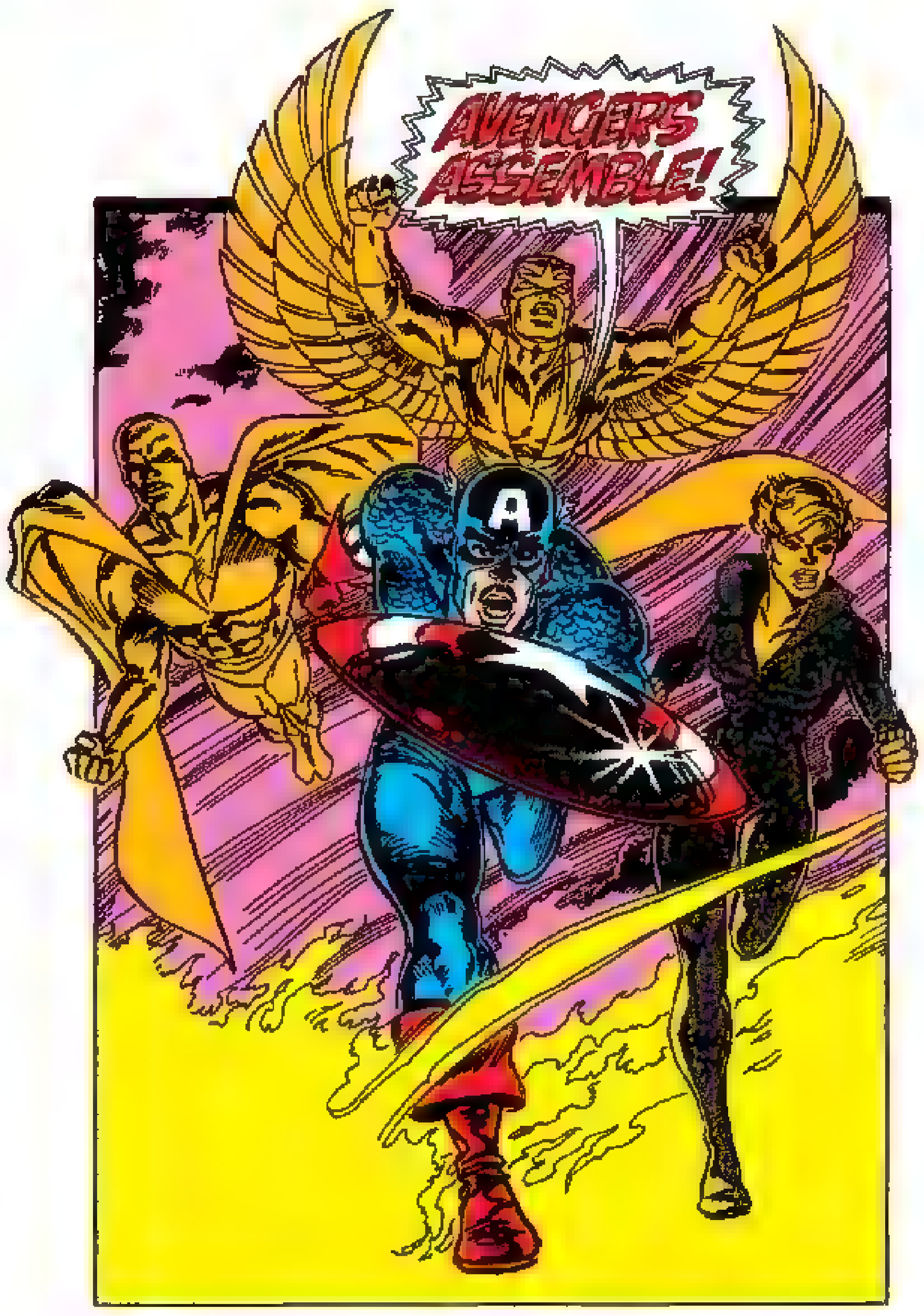
As indicated by the series name, the action in *Operation: Galactic Storm* will be fast, furious and far-flung. Thus, every issue will contain a pivotal event to maintain the pace

When the war is over, the status quo of all participants and the cultural structures of both the Kree and the Shi'Ar will have undergone radical change.

As for the Avengers, the membership of the East Coast team in particular will once again shift. Personal relationships between the members, and between the two teams, will be shaken up for a long time to come.



AVENGERS


AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

The Avengers will be at the core of the *Operation: Galactic Storm* adventure, and it is here that we will first learn of the stargate and the threat it poses to our sun.

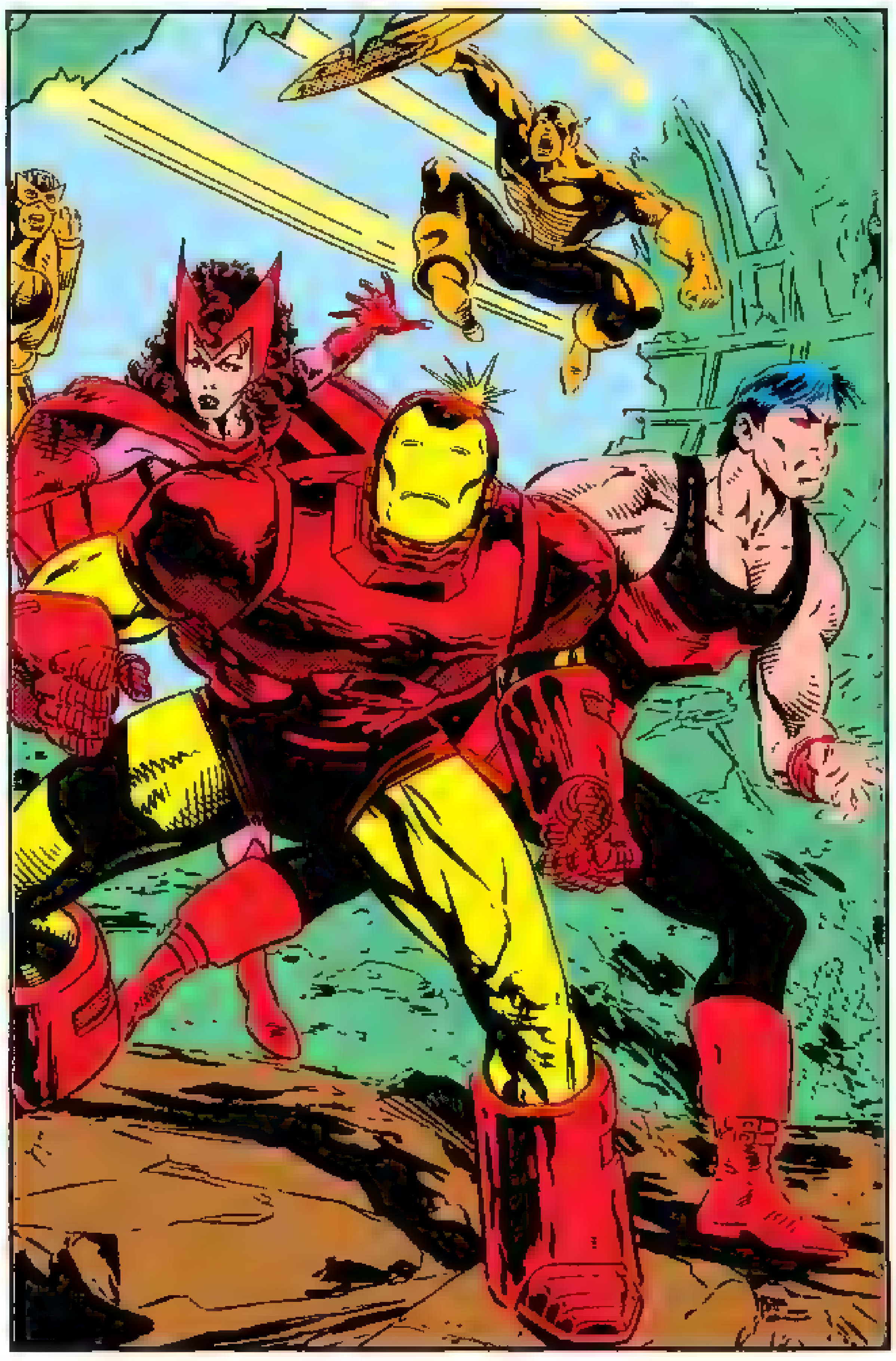
As a result, Captain America will call a bi-coastal meeting of the Avengers, mapping the strategy for their campaigns against the Kree and the Shi'Ar, as well as the plan for the contingent remaining to defend Earth.

Hawkeye will once again become Goliath to wield enough power to join the Kree Envoy, the group that will face the Kree Starforce. It is also in this title that the Kree will face a cataclysm that will change their culture for centuries to come, as *Operation: Galactic Storm* concludes in AVENGERS #347 (March).

Thereafter, the Avengers membership will stabilize with a new status quo, and in the aftermath of the war there will be a lot of far-reaching after-effects within the team and in the relationship between the East and West Coast groups.

WRITER Bob Harras	**INKER** Tom Palmer	**IMPRINT** Marvel	**FORMAT** Newsprint offset	**PAGE COUNT** 32
PENCILER Steve Epting	**EDITOR** Ralph Macchio	**SHIPPING** Ongoing	**FREQUENCY** Monthly	**COVERPRICE** $1.25

AVENGERS WEST COAST



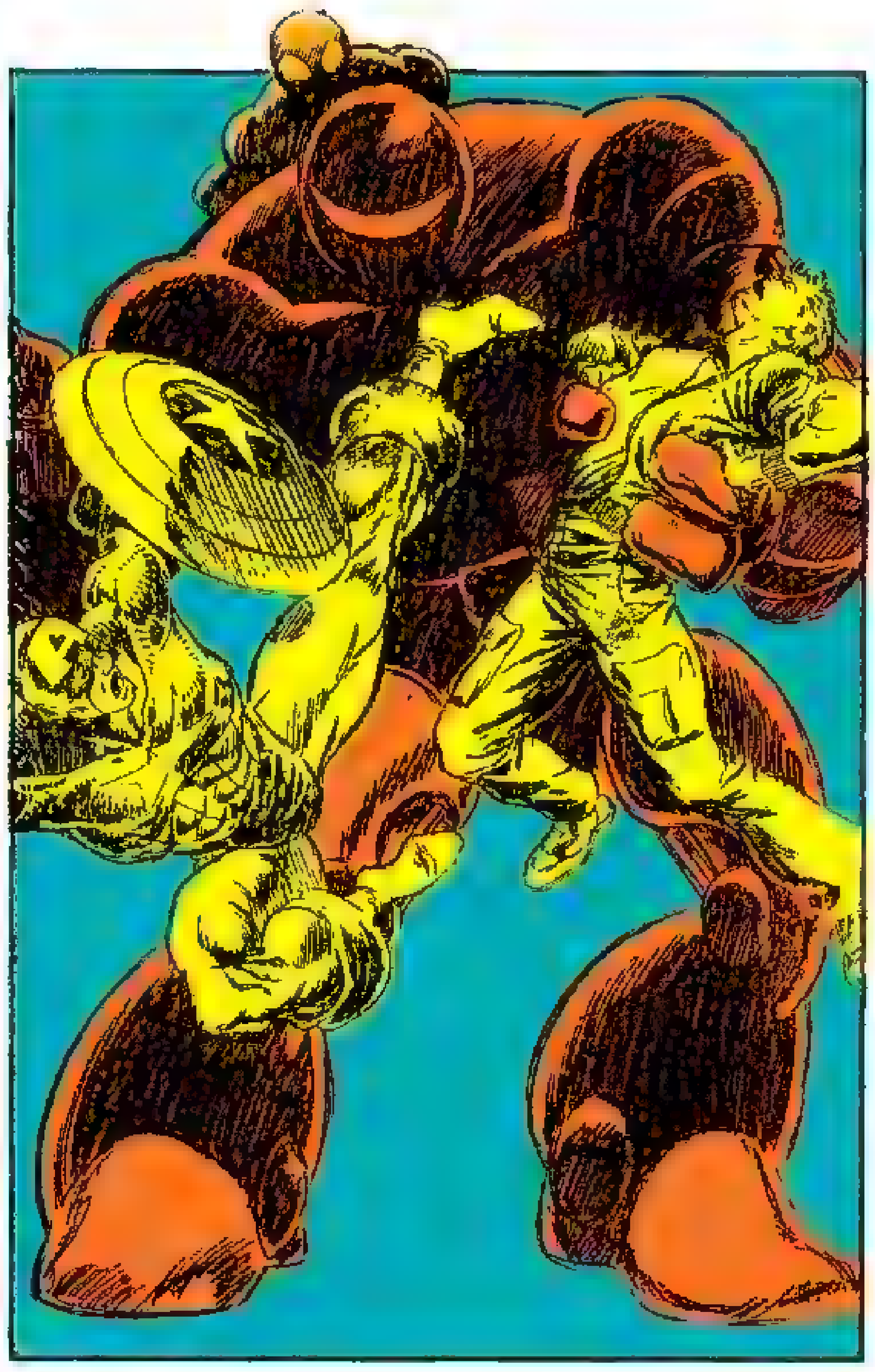
AVENGERS WEST COAST is the first of the two group titles to feature *Operation: Galactic Storm* action when Shi'Ar Imperial Guard members kidnap Rick Jones to drain his mind of strategic information shared with Captain Mar-Vell. In the rescue, The Avengers face both the Imperial Guardsmen and the Kree Super-Sentries, more powerful even than the original model that single-handedly fought the Fantastic Four to a standstill.

The Earth defenders face both Star Force and Imperial Guard members, in a conflict that erupts during a breakout attempt at an Earth prisoner of war compound used to house Kree and Shi'Ar.

The threat to Earth's sun increases when a third party, the Skrulls, capture the Nega-Bomb and transport it through the stargate. It seems the Skrulls have been acting in the shadows, fueling the fires of the war for their own purposes.

Following the conclusion of *Operation: Galactic Storm*, this series will continue to emphasize short, tightly-plotted story arcs designed to keep the pace rapid-fire. The changing relationship between the two Avengers teams will be explored here from the West Coast perspective.

WRITER Roy Thomas	**INKER** Tim Dzon	**IMPRINT** Marvel	**FORMAT** Newsprint offset	**PAGE COUNT** 32
PENCILER David Ross	**EDITOR** Nel Yomtov	**SHIPPING** Ongoing	**FREQUENCY** Monthly	**COVER PRICE** $1.25



CAPTAIN AMERICA

Operation: Galactic Storm begins in CAPTAIN AMERICA #398, when Cap's former partner, Rick Jones, gets first wind of the coming conflagration, and is kidnapped by the Shi'Ar for his efforts.

Things don't get much better when the Kree Envoy of Avengers are brought in as prisoners, and in the ensuing action the relationship between Cap and Iron Man suffers a major blow.

Captain America gets to celebrate his 400th issue in the middle of enemy territory, where he and the other Avengers learn of the threat of the Nega-Bomb, and have to escape from deep inside the Kree Galaxy in order to have a hope of stopping it.

Once safely back on Earth, Cap's life will return to (what passes for) normal, as the Red Skull/Viper relationship heats up, and a major turning point hits Diamondback. And Wolverine, Cable and Feral will get into the action in the *"Hunt for the Man-Wolf,"* John Jameson's bestial alter-ego.

There's never a dull moment for star-spangled sentinels of liberty.

WRITER
Mark Gruenwald

PENCILER
Rik Levins

INKER
Danny Bulanadi

EDITOR
Ralph Macchio

IMPRINT
Marvel

SHIPPING
Ongoing

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$1.25

QUASAR

In outer space, Quasar becomes one of the greatest assets available to both teams of The Avengers. His abilities provide him nearly-instantaneous travel and relatively easy communication, impossible to all the others.

Quasar, visiting the Starcore satellite, is the first to learn of the energy fluctuations in the sun, revealing the formation of the stargate. Contacted by Starfox, he also learns of the Kree plan to remove Mar-Vell's nega-bands from his body, interred on the moon. There he encounters both Imperial Guardsmen and Kree Starforce members.

During *Operation: Galactic Storm*, Quasar will battle Quasar, his namesake in the Shi'Ar Imperial Guard, and while in pursuit of the stolen nega-bands, he will be the first to learn of the Nega-Bomb the Shi'Ar plan to use it against the Kree.

Once *Operation: Galactic Storm* has ended, Quasar will return to Earth to give up membership in the Avengers East Coast group, and to pick up the pieces of his own life and independent careers (super and civilian).

WRITER
Mark Gruenwald

PENCILER
Greg Capullo

INKER
Al Williamson

EDITOR
Kelly Corvese

IMPRINT
Marvel

SHIPPING
Ongoing

FORMAT
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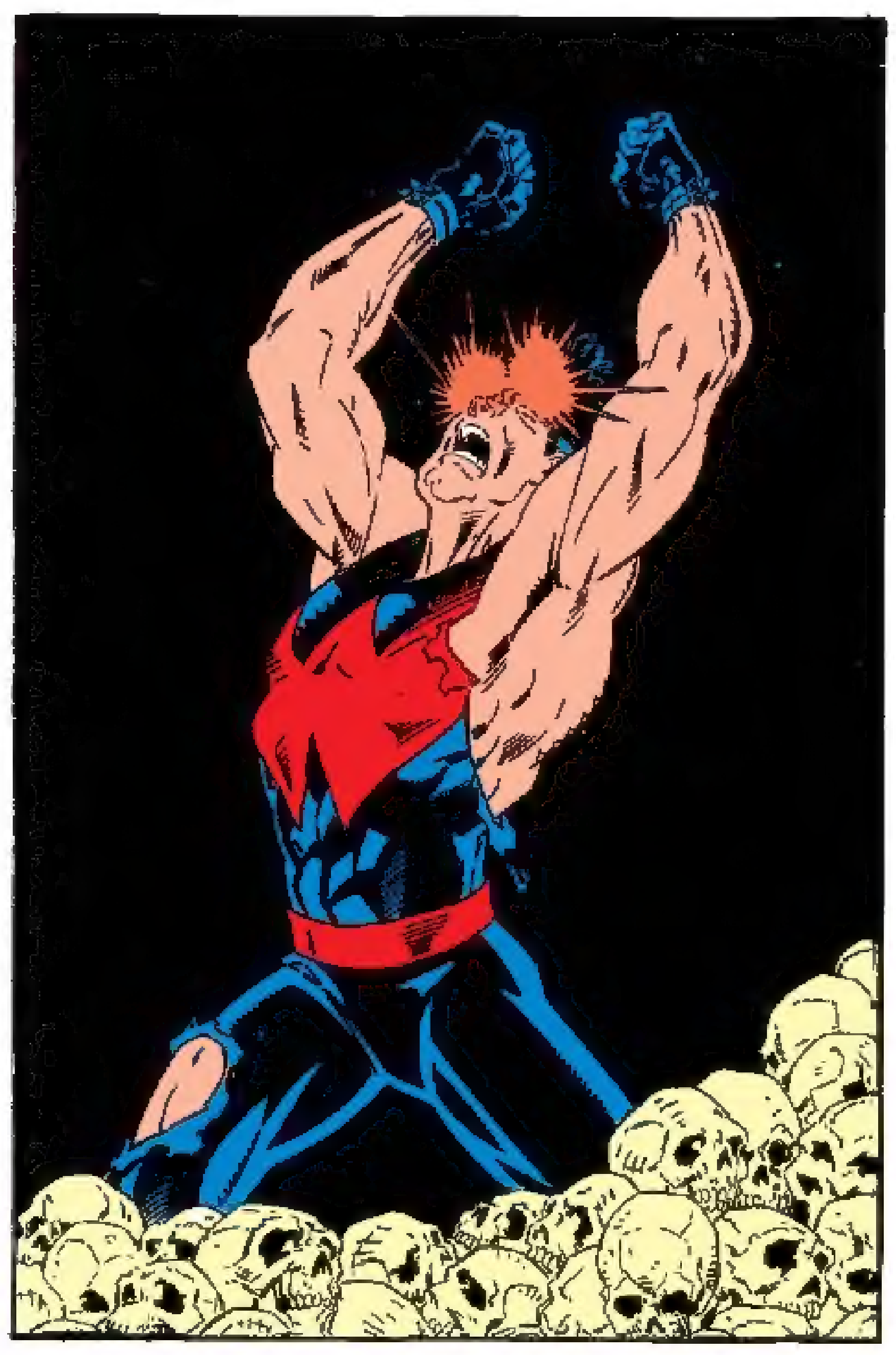
OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

WONDER MAN



WRITER
Gerard Jones

PENCILER
Jeff Johnson

INKER
Jan Anton Harps

EDITOR
Fabian Nicieza

IMPRINT
Marvel

SHIPPING
Ongoing

FORMAT
Newsprint offset

FREQUENCY
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WONDER MAN begins the title's involvement in *Operation: Galactic Storm* on a down note when he unsuccessfully tries to protect Rick Jones from being kidnapped again at the hands of the Kree Starforce. Even though Wondy does defeat Starforce's Captain Atlas, Rick isn't impressed ("I want the Hulk to be my bodyguard, not this idiot!").

Wonder Man and his one-time "brother," The Vision, team-up to try to stop the Nega-Bomb when Empress Lilandra gives the order to launch it against the Kree. Together, they manage to convince the Starjammers not to follow through with the order, but the bomb is lost to the Skrulls.

Then it's Wonder Man vs. The Vision aboard the bomb, and despite everyone's best efforts, the bomb does explode, apparently taking the Avengers with it.

Appearances can be deceiving, and Wonder Man survives to make it back to Earth, where he faces the even more Herculean task of being taken seriously as an actor in Hollywood. He may even finally save up enough money to buy a car.

THE MIGHTY THOR

Considering the power he wields, it's only natural that Thor's part in *Operation: Galactic Storm* will be major-league. The action starts when the Avengers' Shi'Ar Envoy arrives in the Shi'Ar Galaxy, only to be accosted by Gladiator (One of the few foes on Thor's power level). The ensuing battle actually strands the Avengers in the distant galaxy.

THOR #446 teams the Shi'Ar Imperial Guard with the Avengers against the Kree Starforce in an attempt to prevent the assassination of Empress Lilandra.

Following the war, Eric Masterson will continue his adjustment to life as the new Thor, and despite the continued deterioration of his personal life, he will maintain his ongoing search for the original Thunder God, a quest that will bring him into contact with the Celestials, the High Evolutionary, and Ego, the Living Planet.

WRITER
Tom DeFalco

PENCILER
Ron Frenz

INKER
Al Milgrom

EDITOR
Ralph Macchio

IMPRINT
Marvel

SHIPPING
Ongoing

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Newsprint offset

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IRON MAN

Iron Man will lend his high-tech power to the Kree Envoy of Avengers for the duration of *Operation: Galactic Storm*. Upon their arrival in the Kree Galaxy, it will be his technological abilities that are needed to get them to the homeworld of Hala, despite the roadblock created by Kree Starforce member Shatterax.

When most of the Envoy members are captured, it will be up to Iron Man and Hawkeye/Goliath to free them, and it is at this juncture of the war that the Skrulls capture the Nega-Bomb.

During the events of *Operation: Galactic Storm*, the already tense relationship between Iron Man and Captain America will become even more so, leading to long-term changes, not necessarily for the better.

As John Byrne departs to script The X-MEN, writer Len Kaminski of WEREWOLF BY NIGHT and MORBIUS, THE LIVING VAMPIRE picks up the reins, joining penciler Paul Ryan and inker Bob Wiacek.

Len, Paul and Bob will focus more than ever on the technological side of Tony Stark/Iron Man, since this is the element that makes Shellhead truly unique among the heroes of the Marvel Universe.

WRITER
Len Kaminski

PENCILER
Paul Ryan

INKER
Bob Wiacek

EDITOR
Nel Yomtov

IMPRINT
Marvel

SHIPPING
Ongoing

FORMAT
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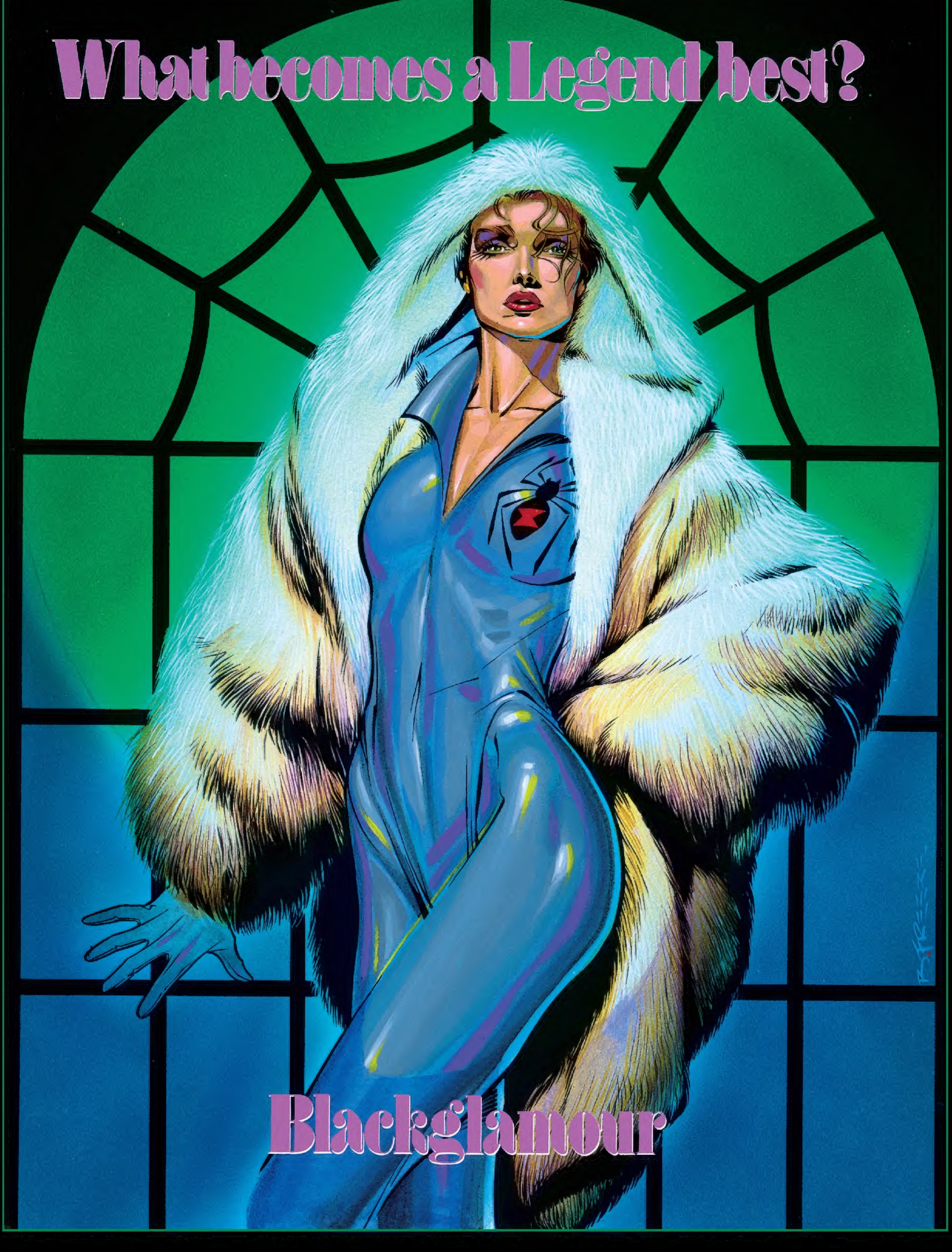
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AVENGERS #345-347, AVENGERS WEST COAST #80-82, QUASAR #32-34, WONDER MAN #7-9, IRON MAN #278-279, THOR #445-446, CAPTAIN AMERICA #401 & MATERIAL FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA #398-400

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